This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, D Clin Psychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.
A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.
This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.
The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.
When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.
Fractals of a Mountain: human-environment relations in the Peruvian Andes

Daniel Thomas Spotswood
Abstract

This thesis is about the personhood of mountains in the southern Peruvian Andes and the ways in which Quechua-speaking people called Runakuna attempt to enter into reciprocal yet asymmetric exchange relations with them. As I slowly came to understand, mountains are incredibly powerful persons who crystalize and control the flow of a life-giving and death-dealing “force” or “power” called animu that is unequally distributed throughout the region. In this thesis, I show how animu tends to get consumed, stored up, and concentrated in some “things” more than others—above all, mountains—and how different ritual techniques are employed in order to get the animu opened up and flowing again along less congested and contained lines. These ritual techniques of “opening up” include actions such as blowing on coca leaves, pouring alcohol into the ground, throwing holy water into the air, taking crosses from a glacier, dancing in a corral, and walking with icons to a pilgrimage shrine. I propose that these practices, among others that I describe, are ways of sharing animu with the mountains in the hope that the mountains will give animu in return; however, given the hierarchical structure in which these exchanges take place, that return is not always guaranteed. Mountains are capricious, and I argue that exchange relations with them follow a logic of sacrifice which can end up reinforcing and not only reproducing but even exacerbating the very structure that is being contested if no return from the more powerful mountain is made. Without a return to the initial sacrificial gift, mountains just get bigger through the consumption of the sacrifice, and the mountain’s fractal and hierarchically encompassing structure expands. In addition to making a contribution to Andean ethnography, this thesis aims to participate in conceptual debates about nonhuman personhood through discussing the ways in which rituals make various features of the environment into particular kinds of persons that are continually being reassigned to different positions in the socio-cosmic hierarchy.
Lay Summary

This thesis is about the ways in which some Quechua-speaking people in the southern Peruvian Andes consider mountains to be incredibly powerful persons. Mountains are understood to be so powerful because they are enormous containers of a “life-force” or energy called *animu*. Everything in the world has *animu*, but some things have more *animu* than others. A particular mountain named Ausangate, which is the highest mountain in the region where I worked for fourteen months, has the most *animu* of all. For this reason, Ausangate is regarded to be the real owner and boss of everyone and everything else in a hierarchical chain of command. In this thesis, I investigate the ways in which my collaborators attempt to disrupt this incredibly unequal system by attempting to transfer *animu* from things that have more of it to things that have less through a number of different ritual techniques. These practices include actions such as offering coca leaves to the mountains by blowing on them, pouring alcohol into the ground, throwing holy water into the air, taking crosses to and from a glacier, dancing in an alpaca corral, and walking with icons to a pilgrimage shrine, among others. Although the attempt is to redistribute *animu* through these kinds of ritual practices, it does not always work because the more powerful others sometimes just take what is offered to them and do not give anything back. When this happens, as the saying goes, the rich just become richer and the poor become poorer. Through a study of how my Quechua-speaking collaborators relate to mountains, this thesis shows how attempts to create more equal societies can sometimes end up furthering inequalities. On the other hand, sometimes it does work—the more powerful other gives back, more mutual alliances are formed, and mountains crumble through the loss of their *animu*. 
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 2
Lay Summary .................................................................................................................................. 3
Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 6
  a. Animu ........................................................................................................................................ 6
  b. Fractal and Hierarchically Distributed Personhood ................................................................. 11
  c. Pilgrimage and Sacrifice ............................................................................................................ 15
  d. Pacchanta, Cusco, Peru ............................................................................................................ 19
  e. Ayllu Relationality and Fieldwork ......................................................................................... 28
  f. Summary of the Chapters ......................................................................................................... 33

Chapter 1: The Cosmic Polity ....................................................................................................... 36
  a. Characteristics of Lightning ...................................................................................................... 36
  b. Animism “Old” and “New” ....................................................................................................... 40
  c. Hierarchical Animism ............................................................................................................... 46
  d. Asymmetric Reciprocity ........................................................................................................... 51
  e. Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 56

Chapter 2: Metapersons ................................................................................................................ 57
  a. Ausangate’s Body Parts (spatial dimensions) ......................................................................... 57
  b. El Mirador (“The Viewpoint”) .................................................................................................. 62
  c. Ausangate’s Body Parts (temporal dimensions) ..................................................................... 65
  d. A Weather Forecasting System ............................................................................................... 69
  e. Pachamama .............................................................................................................................. 72
  f. Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 76

Chapter 3: The Lord of Shining Snow ........................................................................................ 80
  a. An Icon of El Señor .................................................................................................................... 80
  b. Gathering the Icons .................................................................................................................. 85
  c. Apu Qolqepunku ...................................................................................................................... 91
  d. Mass at Juvenal’s House .......................................................................................................... 99
  e. Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 102

Chapter 4: At the Edge of a Melting Glacier ............................................................................. 104
  a. The Ukuku In-Between ............................................................................................................ 104
  b. Sacrificial Communion and Differentiation ......................................................................... 108
  c. The Past is in Front of You, and the Future is Behind You .................................................... 112
  d. Catastrophism and Uniformitarianism .................................................................................... 117
e. Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 122

Chapter 5: Runakuna, the Ukuku Mayor, and Carnaval .............................................. 125
a. Runakuna ................................................................................................................... 125
b. Categories of Identification ...................................................................................... 126
c. The Ukuku Candidate for Mayor ........................................................................... 129
d. Graciano Visits Home .............................................................................................. 135
e. Rondas Campesinas and a Runa-Misti Mayor ......................................................... 137
f. Carnaval ..................................................................................................................... 141
g. Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 145

Chapter Six: Mimesis, Miniatures, and Mountains ......................................................... 147
a. Mass at the Quyllurit’i Pilgrimage Shrine ................................................................ 147
b. Miniatures .................................................................................................................. 150
c. El Señor de Tayankani .............................................................................................. 157
d. La Procesión de 24 Horas ...................................................................................... 165
e. Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 170

Conclusion: A Frozen Water Tap .................................................................................. 171
References ...................................................................................................................... 176
Introduction

a. Animu

Sitting in a place called El Mirador (“The Viewpoint”) with Lucio one day, he opened up a bag of coca leaves and began searching for the best-looking leaves to chew. When he found three shiny and straight leaves without any holes, he took them out of the bag, and holding them in between his index finger and thumb, brought them to his mouth. But, before beginning to chew the leaves himself, Lucio turned his head to face the direction of a glacier-covered mountain named Ausangate, whose north face towers over Lucio’s home in Pacchanta, and he began to blow on the leaves. After blowing on the leaves for a few seconds, Lucio said in a mix of Quechua and Spanish, “Apu (‘Lord’) Ausangate, help my alpacas be fertile and bring more tourists to my home with cash.” He then blew a little more and put the leaves in his mouth to chew.

Lucio proceeded to pick out a few more shiny leaves, and he offered them to me while saying in Quechua, “Hallpakusunchis” (“Let’s chew coca together”). As I had learned to do from chewing coca with him on a regular basis, I accepted the leaves graciously by saying in a long, drawn out, and affectionate way, “Gra-aaa-cias” (“Tha-aaa-nk you”). I then brought the leaves to my mouth and similarly blew on them in the direction of the mountain. I also made a request: “Apu Ausangate, help the alpacas multiply, bring in some more cash for this family, and help me do good research.” I then put the leaves in my mouth to chew as well.

To conclude the cycle of proper coca chewing etiquette, I proceeded to pick out three more good-looking leaves from the bag, and I passed them to Lucio while saying, “Hallpakusunchis.” He likewise received the leaves graciously by saying in a long, drawn out, and affectionate way, “Gra-aaa-cias,” and he put the leaves in his mouth to chew some more. Having completed this initial round of exchange, we could then freely draw from the bag and chew as many leaves as we desired for personal consumption, only giving leaves to each other and to Ausangate from time to time as we saw fit.

Finding the right balance between giving leaves away and consuming them oneself was a delicate practice that I had to learn to negotiate depending on the social context of the chewing occasion. As I was taught by Lucio and others in Pacchanta, when someone gives you some coca leaves and says, “Let’s chew coca together,” you should receive them graciously, and then give them some coca leaves in return. Moreover, people who may be considered to be more powerful or influential than oneself should always be given coca leaves first. That is why
coca is always given first to Ausangate—the mountain is the most powerful person around—more powerful than any other human or “nonhuman person” in the region (cf. Hallowell 1960).

This thesis is about the personhood of mountains in the southern Peruvian Andes and the ways in which Quechua-speaking people called Runakuna attempt to enter into reciprocal yet asymmetric exchange relations with them. As I slowly came to understand, blowing on coca leaves (among many other ritual practices that I will describe) is a way of sharing a “vitalising force” or “power” called animu with the mountain in the hope that the mountain will give animu in return; however, given the hierarchical structure in which exchanges such as this take place, that return is not always guaranteed. In this thesis, I show how animu tends to get consumed, stored up, and concentrated in a variety of human and nonhuman beings—above all, mountains—and how different ritual techniques are employed in order to get the animu flowing again and redistributed along more horizontal and less vertical lines. However, as I show, these ritual techniques follow a logic of sacrifice which can end up reinforcing and not only reproducing but even exacerbating the very structure that is being contested if no return from the more powerful other is made.

For anyone familiar with the Andes, the idea that mountains are persons should come as no surprise since it is widespread in the region, and it has generated much discussion in the Andean ethnographic literature. However, while ethnographers regularly recount that mountains are commonly treated as persons in the Andes, there is much discrepancy in the literature on what kind of a person a mountain is. Are mountains “insiders” or “outsiders”? Are they kin or affines? Or, are they complete strangers? Are mountains male or female, or something in between, or neither? Are we talking about a spirit of the mountain or the mountain itself in its material form? Are mountains indigenous? Or white? Or mestizo? Or some other racialised category? Are mountains predators or prey? Friends or enemies? Dead or alive? Or both at the same time? What kind of a person is a mountain? (For some of these ethnographic discussions, see Abercrombie 2016; Allen 1997, 2002 [1988], 2015, 2016; Arguedas 1964 [1956]; Bastien 1978; Canessa 2012; de la Cadena 2015; Gose 1986, 1994, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Harris 1980, 2000; Isbell 1978; Morote Best 1956; Nash 1979; Randall 1982; Salas Carreño 2006, 2014, 2016, 2020, 2021a, 2021b; Sallnow 1987; Sheild Johansson 2019; Taussig 1987; Valderrama Fernández and Escalante Gutiérrez 1996; Van Vleet 2008).

One of the reasons for the lack of agreement among ethnographers concerning the status of a mountain as a person is due to the banal point that there seems to be little uniformity and consensus among the human people themselves who live in the Andes. In different social and historical contexts, mountains may be aligned with all of the categories mentioned above and
more. Furthermore, for some, mountains are not persons at all, and to treat them as such by doing things like giving them coca leaves is considered to be a “superstitious” practice “from the past” that should be abandoned. However, for the majority of my interlocutors in Pacchanta, giving coca leaves and other substances to mountains is a regular practice of everyday life, and the personhood of mountains is more or less taken for granted. And while there is a variety of ways of speaking about and treating mountains as different kinds of persons, I would like to suggest that there is one characteristic that mountains always have in common: in any given context and set of relations, mountains are always seated in positions of power over others—a type of power that was described to me as animu. Mountains, as I illustrate throughout this thesis, are containers of highly condensed concentrations of animu.

In some ways, animu may be understood as a “life-force” that is similar to many others described in ethnographic literature from around the world. As Sahlins observes, life-forces such as “mana, hasina, wakan, semengat, orenda, nawalak, or the like” are those vitalising principles “that make people’s gardens grow, their pigs flourish, and game animals become visible and available to them” (2017: 113-114). In the context of the Andes, animu is that which makes the potatoes grow, alpacas multiply, and people work. Animu is a force that gives life, but what is this thing called “life” anyway? And, who or what is giving it, or forcing it, and who or what might be taking it away? How might a life-force simultaneously be a death-force?

In a discussion of the work of Marcel Mauss, Lévi-Strauss called mana, and other life-force terms like it such as wakan and orenda from North America, a “floating signifier” (1987 [1950]). He meant this as a criticism in that the term has no clear referent. It can refer to so many different things at once that it ends up saying nothing at all. Mana just kind of floats around in the ether and can attach itself to nearly anything and everything that is related to ideas about spirit, soul, life, mind, power, potency, efficacy, magic, vitality, authority, and so on. Lévi-Strauss says that Mauss, Durkheim, and many others from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who were engaged in heated debates about life-forces were not wrong to bring together a diversity of terms that had shared characteristics and to place them in the same category; it is just that, according to Lévi-Strauss, these terms do not constitute scientific knowledge. Rather, life-force terms operate at the level of the symbolic—of art, myth, and poetry—in which there is a discontinuity between the signifier and the signified. Due to this discontinuity, the signifier can refer to a plurality of different signifieds. Knowledge, on the other hand, for Lévi-Strauss, is characterised by a one-to-one correspondence between the signifier and the signified (1987 [1950]: 60). The signifier has a clear referent and there is a
unity of meaning rather than a plurality. For Lévi-Strauss, symbols are polysemic whereas knowledge is monosemic.

To go ahead and put my cards on the table from the start, if it is not clear already, my discussion throughout this thesis of mountains as powerful concentrations of animu has no pretension of being “purely scientific knowledge;” however, it is not “purely artistic” and “symbolic” either. Rather, it is somewhere in-between. This thesis is the product of a particular encounter between me, my interlocutors in Pacchanta (including the mountains themselves), and the academic community of which I am a part, and the result, I think, is both a fictive invention and a factual representation of human-mountain relations and the exchanges of animu between them (cf. Wagner 1981). Although Lévi-Strauss is sometimes said to have brought the “mana debates” to an end by calling mana and other life-force terms like it “floating signifiers,” I think that it is precisely because life-force signifiers float around so much that they deserve all the more ethnographic and anthropological attention (MacClancy 1986; Mazzarella 2017; Tomlinson & Kawika Tengan 2016). What does a life-force signifier like animu signify in different times and different places, and what are the implications and consequences of those various significations?

As I further elaborate in Chapter One, animu is a Quechua term derived from the Spanish word ánimo. From Spanish, the word ánimo can be translated in a number of different ways such as “spirit,” “zest,” “life,” “mind,” and “soul.” The Spanish word itself comes from the Latin anima which has a range of similar meanings. Moreover, like the life-force term mana from the context of Polynesia, animu and ánimo are not only nouns; they can also be used as verbs (cf. Keesing 1984). Animu or ánimo can be used as an imperative to encourage or even make someone do something. It is like saying, “Cheer up!” “Let’s go!” or “Wake up!” In English, the word “animate,” of course, comes from the same Latin root, and it can be used in variety of ways as well. Something can be animate, or it can be animated by an animator who is doing the animation. As a “floating signifier,” the ways in which the term may be used in different contexts and different languages is vast.

Xavier Ricard Lanata (2007) and Catherine Allen (2016) suggest that the word animu, in its contemporary use in the area around Ausangate, retains, to a large extent, the meaning of the Quechua word camac as it was used in the early colonial period. Camac, in other words, may be understood as another life-force term. Frank Salomon, based on his study of the word camac as it appears in a colonial document called the Huarochiri Mansuscript (ca. 1600), defines camac as a “vitalising prototype” (1991: 16). He explains that the word comes from the Quechua verb camay, which he defines as, “a concept of specific essence and force, to
charge with being, to infuse with species power” (1991: 16). Salomon proceeds to relate that “all things have their vitalizing prototypes or camac, including human groups [. . .] religious practice supplicates the camac ever to vitalize its camasca, that is, its tangible instance or manifestation” (1991: 16). To illustrate the idea, Salomon provides an example from a chapter on astronomy in the Huarochíri Manuscript which describes a constellation of stars in the shape of a llama. This constellation of stars in the sky is the camac of the llamas on earth. Salomon writes, “on descending to earth this constellation infuses a powerful generative essence of llama vitality, which causes earthly llamas to flourish” (1991: 16). A camac, then, is not a life-force in a generic sense, as some kind of universal animating power, but rather, a life-force in a very particular sense. Different camacs infuse their own individuating being or “aura” (Benjamin 1982) with particular characteristics (like “llama-ness”) into their own camascas (“specific manifestations”). A camasca, in other words, is an extension of the camac’s self. Following this understanding, I agree with Allen (2016) then that the word “prototype,” as Salomon defines it, is not the most accurate term for defining a camac. She writes, “the purpose of a prototype is to serve as the basis for more refined versions of its self” (2016: 430). Camascas are not “more refined versions” of their camacs; rather, they are the very manifestations or instantiations of their camacs.

Other life-force terms appear in the Andean ethnographic literature such as sami (Allen 2002) and callpa (Taylor 1987; Topic 2015; van de Guchte 1990); however, I do not use these terms because they were not used by my interlocutors as much as animu, and to a lesser extent, camac. For example, Apu Ausangate is sometimes referred to as a camachikuq. This term is used to describe a person who occupies a position of power and authority over others, or as de la Cadena’s interlocutors described, a person “endowed with the attribute of commanding” (2015: 244). Ausangate is the first in command over other Apus as well as all other humans. Ausangate is also called munayniyuq which may be translated as “owner of the will” (de la Cadena 2015: 244). The term derives from the Quechua verb munay which means, “to will, to desire, or to love,” and the suffix -yuq indicates possession, so a munayniyuq is a person who possesses or owns the wills, desires, and loves of others. Ausangate is the highest authority who has the power of commanding and of making the wills and desires of others conform to his own. And I say “his own” because Ausangate is indeed male as I discuss in Chapter One. Finally, and to conclude this section, I would not go so far as to argue that the contemporary meaning of the term animu retains the same significance as the term camac from the colonial period (since they are both “floating signifiers” after all with no unitary meaning); however, this idea of the way in which the camasca participates in the being of the camac and works as
an extension of the camac’s self does resonate with many of the ways in which I encountered the concept of animu “in the field,” which I will return to now, if only briefly, in order to continue developing the key ideas and themes of this thesis.

b. Fractal and Hierarchically Distributed Personhood

While chewing coca leaves with Lucio in El Mirador (“The Viewpoint”), he started to show off to me the latest advancements that he had made on one of his many ongoing projects. On top of a small hill just behind his house, he was building a miniaturized “replica” of Mount Ausangate, as shown below:

![Mount Ausangate Replica](image)

To provide a sense of scale, the “replica” of Ausangate rises about a metre off the ground, and the summit of the “real” Ausangate in the distance rises approximately 2000 vertical metres above the replica to an altitude of 6300 metres above sea level. I’m not sure what the horizontal distance is between the replica and the mountain (probably about 8 kilometres or so), but it doesn’t really matter because, as I demonstrate with many examples throughout this thesis, the line between the “replica” and the “real” is not so easy to define (cf. Benjamin 1982; Taussig 2018 [1993]). Plus, when just talking about mountains, where does a mountain begin and end
anyway? Are not the rocks in the replica pieces of the mountain? How about the photographer of this photo—(in this case, me) standing at approximately 4300 metres above sea level—is he a part of the mountain as well, or separate from it? A bit like me playing around with this photograph, Lucio was always fiddling around with the rocks in the replica in order to get his representation of the mountain just right. However, as I develop in Chapter Two, the replica in this photo is not only a representation of Ausangate; rather, similar to a camasca, it is an instantiation of the mountain. The replica is one of Ausangate’s many pieces—pieces that are simultaneously wholes.

In the foreground of the photo are more pieces of the mountain in the form of miniature stone alpacas called ingaychus. Lucio also liked to call them khuya rumi. When he used this term with me one day, I already knew that rumi meant “rock” or “stone,” but I did not know what khuya meant, so I asked him, and he said in Spanish, “es como el cariño entre un hombre y un mujer” (“it’s like the love/affection between a man and a woman”). Khuya rumi, then, are “loving” or “affectionate stones.”¹ They are widespread throughout the region and have been commented on by many ethnographers (Allen 2002, 2016; de la Cadena 2015; Flores Ochoa 1977; Ricard Lanata 2007). Allen, for example, describes them as “gifts from powerful places that invigorate the herd” (2016: 416). Similar to a constellation of stars in the shape of a llama that gives life to the llamas, an ingaychu in the shape of an alpaca is a camac that gives vitality to the alpacas. Flores Ochoa likewise remarks that an ingaychu is “the source and origin of happiness, well-being and abundance” (1977: 218 as cited by Allen 2016: 419). However, to be clear, the happiness, well-being, and abundance that an ingaychu gives is not a “pure gift” (cf. Descola 2013; Derrida 1995; Nancy 1991); rather, it is part of an exchange that requires reciprocation (Mauss 2011 [1925]). In order for the ingaychu to give vitality to the alpacas, the ingaychu must be cared for, nurtured, and fed things like coca leaves and beer. If these substances are withheld and the ingaychu is no longer nourished and fed, then it may lash out violently in hunger until losing its power (as I share with details in Chapters One and Two). This “power,” once again, is what was described to me as animu. An ingaychu, like a mountain, is a container of animu.

In a similar discussion of ingaychus, Marisol de la Cadena writes, “the Andean ethnographic record has translated ingaychu as a small stone in the shape of an animal or plant that earth-beings give some individuals (by making them find it); it is the animu (or essence)

¹ Mannheim (2020: 375) observes that rumi means “individuated stone” whereas qaqa means “rock” in the more generic sense as a substance.
of that animal or plant, and nurturing it is good for the health of the herd or the crop that the *inqaychu* is” (2015: 107). She then proceeds to suggest that the *inqaychu* is not only the *animu* of a particular plant or animal such as an alpaca; it is also a piece of the “earth-being” itself, such as Ausangate, who gifted the *inqaychu* in the first place. An *inqaychu* is a gift or extension of the earth-being’s self in which the boundary between subject and object disappears. De la Cadena writes, “with the help of my friends, I learned that the inqaychu is the earth-being itself—a piece of it, which is also all of it—but shaped in a specific form of a plant, animal, or person” (2015: 107). Unlike Lucio’s “replica” which instantiates the presence of Ausangate based on a logic of resemblance and imitation, an *inqaychu* instantiates the presence of the mountain through a non-resemblant form—that is, through the form of an alpaca (cf. Taussig 2018 [1993]). *Inqaychus* are more pieces of the mountain—pieces, again, that are simultaneously wholes.

Allen (2016), drawing on the work of Roy Wagner (1991), proposes that the notion of a “fractal” might be a helpful concept for understanding this “Andean understanding” of the relationship between parts and wholes. Allen writes, “fractal terminology […] approximates the way Andean people experience the material world as characterized by dynamic changes in scale and interchangeability of parts and whole” (2016: 423). A fractal is a pattern in which the same form replicates itself across space (and time) at various levels of magnification—that is, although the scale changes, the pattern or form remains the same. Moving discussions of fractals from the disciplines of geometry and mathematics to anthropology in his work on personhood in Melanesia, Wagner proposes that “a fractal person is never a unit standing in relation to an aggregate, or an aggregate standing in relation to a unit, but always an entity with relationship integrally implied” (1991: 163). Similar to Strathern’s (1988) notion of the “dividual person,” a fractal person cannot be set apart from social relations because it is precisely those social relations that constitute the person. Conceptually thinking through a fractal implies that parts and wholes, units and aggregates, or individual and societies are embedded in and co-constituted by each other.

Alfred Gell’s (1998) notion of “distributed personhood” also helps to explain how *Apus* like Ausangate distribute their *animu* through material objects such as *inqaychus* (“objects,” of course, which are also subjects). Allen (2016) notes that his concept addressed “the way art objects are imbued with the agency of their creators, thus becoming secondary agents” (2016: 429). Pieces of art are thus extensions of the artist’s self since “[a]s social persons, we are present, not just in our singular bodies, but in everything in our surroundings which bears witness to our existence, our attributes, our agency” (Gell 1998: 103 as cited by Allen 2016: 429).
Similar to a fractal person, a distributed person is not confined to a single body but rather spills out across a multiplicity of bodies.

Like Allen, I have also found the ideas of “fractals” and “distributed personhood” to be helpful analytical tools for understanding my own interlocutors’ experiences of “being-in-the-world” (2016: 423); however, in this thesis, I would like to develop these ideas a little further by exploring the ways in which fractals and different distributions of personhood might be linked to another common topic in Andean ethnography (and beyond)—that is, to the topic of hierarchy. How might the structure of a fractal be hierarchical? How might fractal persons hierarchically encompass and contain other persons and simultaneously be hierarchically encompassed and contained by still more others? As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, some nodes in the network or units in the aggregate are composed of more tightly condensed clusters of relations, and the greater number of relations that converge upon and are contained within any single unit, the greater amount of power or animu that unit has.

Apu Ausangate is a fractal person whose being or animu is contained within and distributed through a plurality of distinct bodies, and I argue that this distribution and extension of Ausangate’s body over space and time is precisely what makes the mountain such a powerful person. As I develop in Chapter One, Ausangate is a “plural singularity” (Fausto 2012) whose body hierarchically encompasses and contains a multiplicity of parts. Like Walt Whitman (2015 [1892]), Ausangate can say, “(I am large, I contain multitudes)” (book III, section 51) and “am not contain’d [sic] between my hat and boots” (book III, section 7). This understanding of hierarchy as distribution and encompassment also draws on Dumont’s (1980) work on the caste system in India where he writes, “I believe that hierarchy is not, essentially, a chain of super-imposed commands, nor even a chain of beings of decreasing dignity, nor yet a taxonomic tree, but a relation that can succinctly be called ‘the encompassing of the contrary’” (1980: 239). For Dumont, in any given set of relations, the hierarchically superior position is characterised by an essential sameness in which the alterity of the other is encompassed and contained. Differences and distinctions only emerge at the lower levels of being. For example, in Chapter One, I show with details from my fieldwork how lightning is an extension of Ausangate’s self. In other words, lightning is Ausangate. There is an essential sameness between the two. However, the same cannot be said the other way around. While lightning is Ausangate, it is not the case that Ausangate is lightning because the mountain is composed of many more parts than lightning alone. Like an ingaychu, lightning is one of Ausangate’s many distributed and fractal pieces that help to compose the bigger body of the mountain.
Dumont’s understanding of hierarchy as encompassment has been criticised for the way in which the model leads to a closed system—a totality in which there is no outside (Rio & Smedal 2010). Difference is always ultimately encompassed by sameness and identification. The outside is just the inside of something else at a larger scale. While writing this thesis, I was led to much the same monistic conclusion until realising that difference is precisely what allows fractals and distributed persons to grow and expand over space and time. From the perspective of a fractal person, everyone/thing is a “potential affine” (Viveiros de Castro 2001) to incorporate and to draw into oneself ad infinitum like a stack of turtles that go all the way down. And, once again, the more “things” that are incorporated and the more sets of relations that are established, the more power or animu that being has. Throughout this thesis, I show how this ever-expanding consumption of alterity has led to an incredibly unequal “cosmopolitical” (de la Cadena 2010; Stengers 2005) structure, and I focus on some of the ritual techniques that are employed in order to redistribute the animu and get it flowing again along less congested, stacked, and contained lines.

In the next section, I would like to situate these various ritual techniques or “tactics” (de Certeau 1988) in relation to the topics of pilgrimage and sacrifice—two types of ritual performance that are concerned with both “bringing things together” into relations of sameness and “breaking things apart” into relations of difference. After a consideration of pilgrimage and sacrifice, I devote the second half of this introduction to a discussion of the place where I did fieldwork as well as how I carried it out, and I conclude with an overview of the chapters ahead. Finally, in order to keep this Introduction “on the ground,” I would like to begin my discussion of pilgrimage and sacrifice with a brief return to “the field.”

c. Pilgrimage and Sacrifice

At the end of a zig-zagging walk to the top of a hill on our way to the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine, a glacier-covered mountain named Apu Qolqepunku came into sight for the first time on our trip, and I was instructed by the leader of the group with whom I was travelling to kneel down and to take off my hat. Since this was my first visit to the shrine, I was informed that I needed to be “baptized” alongside several other novice pilgrims. First, I was told to tie three knots in the grass using my left hand while keeping my eyes fixed on the shrine ahead. Since I am not left-handed and I could not even look at the blades of grass, which were barely long enough to grab, I found the task to be quite difficult. After passing an inspection of the knots that I somewhat managed to tie, an icon of the crucified Christ housed in a red and
golden-coloured box was then escorted toward me and held in front of my face. As I continued to kneel facing the direction of the shrine and with my eyes now fixed on the icon, the caporal, the boss of our pilgrimage group, proceeded to whip me three times on the butt while saying in a mix of Quechua and Spanish, “Dios Yayaq, Dios Churiq, Dios Espiritu Santo Sutinpi,” (“In the Name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit”). After the lashing, I stood up and was directed to kiss the whip and to hug the whipper. A few smiles and a bit of laughter accompanied this otherwise quite serious and violent ceremony.

The icon that was held in front of my face as I was whipped is called a demanda (“demand,” “petition,” or “request”). It is also affectionately known in Quechua as taytacha (“dear father”). Each year, in the days leading up to the feast day of Corpus Christi, this icon, together with many others similar to it, is brought to a pilgrimage shrine high in the Peruvian Andes named El Señor de Quyllurit’i (“The Lord of Shining Snow”). When groups of pilgrims called comparsas arrive at the shrine after an eight-kilometre walk uphill from the nearest highway, they immediately bring their icons into a church and place them next to an image of Christ that has been painted on a large boulder behind the altar. The icon that we were travelling with is a replication of this image of Christ on the boulder (cf. Mitchell 2005).

This image of Christ on the boulder is El Señor de Quyllurit’i who, as I illustrate throughout this thesis, is one of the most powerful nodes in the network of relations that compose Ausangate’s fractal and hierarchically distributed body. One of the main points of bringing the icons to the shrine each year is to re-connect and re-establish relations with El Señor in order to secure his “blessing” and to carry it back home through the icons where this blessing might manifest itself in things such as cash, houses, cars, employment, health, and marriage. Similar to the relationship between a camac and a camasca that I described in the first section, the taytachas or demandas must connect to their superior source in order to be re-vitalized so that they may continue to be a source of well-being and abundance. Sallnow describes the demanda as a type of “bateria” (“battery”) that must be recharged by placing it next to its source (1974: 127). Moreover, like the miniature stone alpacas called ingaychus that I discussed in the last section, a demanda is not only a representation of El Señor de Quyllurit’i; it is a piece of Quyllurit’i’s distributed and fractal body—an extension of Quyllurit’i’s self (Salas Carreño 2020).

As I elaborate in Chapters Three and Four, walking in pilgrimage with the demandas is a way of putting the pieces of the body back together again so that those pieces might be recharged through the assemblage. Once the festival at the shrine is over, that body is split back up, redistributed, and dispersed along less condensed and concentrated lines. The entire process
of the pilgrimage follows a logic of sacrifice that is concerned with the establishment of continuity between discontinuous things (putting the pieces together) as well as the creation of discontinuity between continuous things (breaking the pieces apart) (cf. Descola 2013; Graeber 2011; Lévi-Strauss 1966; Mayblin & Course 2014; Rio 2014). Pilgrimage and sacrifice are simultaneously constructive and destructive performances.

As I also describe in Chapters Three and Four, a similar dynamic of sacrifice is at play in the pilgrimage through the transfer of crosses to and from the mountain glacier that hangs above the shrine. This glaciated mountain is named Qolqepunku and is considered by many to be an Apu (“Lord”) like Ausangate—Qolqepunku is yet another one of Ausangate’s fractal pieces. During the pilgrimage festival, groups of ritual dancers called ukukus are responsible for bringing crosses to the edge of the glacier above the shrine and planting them in the ice overnight. The next morning at sunrise, the ukukus descend back down to the shrine, and they bring the crosses into the church where the demandas have been sitting next to the boulder. At this point, a final Catholic mass is celebrated to mark the end of the event, and the demandas are carried back out from the shrine. It is only when the crosses have returned to the boulder from the glacier that the demandas may return back home. Salas Carreño (2014, 2020) suggests that this movement from the glacier to the boulder in the church signals a relation of dependence of the boulder on the mountain glacier. That is, in order for the boulder to be able to recharge the demandas, the boulder must first be recharged by its superior source—the greater mountain of which the boulder is a part. The movement from the mountain glacier to the boulder and to the demandas follows a fractal pattern in which each node is hierarchically encompassed by its self-similar yet superior source.

Along with other ritual practices that I describe throughout this thesis, I propose that the movements of the demandas and the crosses carried by the pilgrims are sacrificial performances that work to open up “routes” or “paths” in order to transfer animu from things that possess more of it to things that possess less (cf. Hocart 1970 [1936]). Once again, the point is that in the fractal network I am describing, animu tends to get concentrated and condensed in certain units in the web more than others, so various ritual techniques must be employed in order to get the animu flowing again and re-distributed along less condensed lines. Pilgrimage and sacrifice are ritual practices that work to open up routes for these flows to occur.

However, that subversive and rather romantic aspect of pilgrimage and sacrifice has another side. In the effort to contest existing social structures and to create a more egalitarian sense of “communitas” (Turner 1969), the sacrificial performances of the pilgrimage can end up reinforcing and reproducing the very structures of which they are a part. Sacrifice may be
understood as the first step in a relationship of reciprocal exchange; it is the initial “gift” or act of “giving up” (Allen 2015; Gose 1986; Lambek 2007; Mannheim 1991). However, the problem is that a “return” to this sacrificial gift is not always guaranteed. In asymmetrical exchanges, unless a return is made, the more powerful other only grows more powerful through the consumption of the sacrifice, and the unequal structure is reinforced and even exacerbated.

Concerning this relationship between resistance and reproduction, or “anti-structure and structure” (Turner 1969), I find it helpful to think of the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine as a “heterotopic” place. Foucault proposes that heterotopias are places that exist in relation to all other places “but in such a way that they suspend, neutralize, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected or represented by them” (1998: 178). In other words, heterotopias are not sites of romantic resistance nor purely hegemonic places; rather, they are both at the same time. These places both reflect and contest the structures of which they are a part (cf. Brightman 1999). They are enclosed places that paradoxically open up and provide passage to other points.

So far, I have been describing the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage from the position of the ritual dancers who carry the demandas and the crosses to and from the shrine. However, these are not the only participants in the pilgrimage; there is, of course, a much greater diversity of ways in which the pilgrimage is performed and experienced (see Salas Carreño 2014). And, even among the ritual dancers who carry the demandas and the crosses, there is no single meaning to the practices of the pilgrimage. As Sallnow observes, “when people converge in pilgrimage, meanings collide” (1991: 137).

In Chapter Four, I describe how meanings collided during the ritual of taking crosses to the glacier. For the group of ukukus with whom I was travelling, planting the crosses in the ice was a key part of the performance. However, when we arrived at the edge of the ice, there was another group of ukukus already there who pleaded with us not to trespass onto the ice. They said that they were there to “protect” the glacier and to keep other pilgrims from taking ice from it. In Chapter Four, I show how this episode is part of a longer drama about concerns for the glacier that is visibly receding more and more each year, and I describe how the issue has been represented in international media outlets such as BBC, National Geographic, Time Magazine, and many more with dramatic headlines such as “Ukukus Wonder Why a Sacred Glacier Melts in Peru’s Andes: it could portend world’s end so mountain worshippers are stewarding the ice” (Regalado 2005 Wall Street Journal). I argue that a shift in practices is taking place away from a logic based on “sacrificial exchange” and toward one that emphasises “protection” and “stewardship,” and I show how the performance of environmental protection
is linked to stereotypical representations of indigeneity to which \textit{ukukus} from urban centres are conforming.

In Chapters Five and Six, I continue to use examples from the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage to illustrate how this fractal and hierarchically distributed system is not a closed and fixed cosmological system but rather an ongoing and dynamic one that is continuously being produced and refashioned through historically contingents sets of power relations. Which nodes in the network are more condensed, concentrated, powerful, and hierarchically encompassing than others is not “set in stone.” Even though mountains might appear to be permanent fixtures in the landscape, of course they are not, especially in the context of “deep time.” Mountains, like human social structures, rise and fall in a series of repetitions with significant differences along the way (cf. Deleuze 2004 [1994]).

However, when I say things such as “mountains, like human social structures . . .”, I would like to make it clear that this thesis is not simply about the ways in which humans project their own selves and forms of social relations onto the environment; rather, it is the other way around; that is, how the environment hierarchically encompasses and projects its own form onto us. For example, if I were to look at the fractal pattern of a tree or a river system and think that it looks like the veins in my arm, then that would be me projecting myself onto the environment. What I am suggesting is something different; that is, not how trees and rivers simply look like the veins in a human arm but how the veins of a human participate in the same fractal structure and pattern of trees and rivers. The environment, the earth, the cosmos hierarchically encompasses the human; not the other way around. In many ways the human is at the centre of this thesis, making it quite anthropocentric; however, it calls for a more “humble anthropocentrism” (Canguilhem 1994, 2008; Course 2021)—which relativizes that human centre as just one of many centres in a much larger fractal web.

Now that I have sketched the main themes and ideas of this thesis, I would like to turn to a discussion of the place where many of these ideas began to grow and take shape in the context of everyday domestic life, not just in large-scale rituals. That place is called Pacchanta where I spent fourteen months of ethnographic fieldwork while living with a Quechua-speaking family whose primary income is generated through alpaca herding and the emerging “adventure tourist” industry. After a discussion of the place, I will say more about the family and my relationship to them.

d. Pacchanta, Cusco, Peru
Nation-states, like mountains, are people too, at least, that is how we often talk about them. As Sahlins writes, “Consider these items from the front section of a randomly selected issue of the New York Times, November 7, 2013 [. . .] ‘Rwanda has repeatedly spoken out against the Security Council’; ‘[The Turkish government] is torn between its Islamist sympathies and its desire to become a member of the European Union’” (2014: 289). Rwanda speaks; Turkey has sympathies and desire; the list could go on. For example, Uncle Sam, wearing a red, white, and blue suit and top hat, looks sternly at you and pointing his finger into your face, says:

![Uncle Sam poster](image)

Nations, like mountains, are powerful persons too who demand sacrifice.

If nations are people too, then through the eyes of the Peruvian state, Pacchanta is seen as a fractal piece of its body called an annex. Zooming out from Pacchanta, the state sees this annex as one that is hierarchically encompassed and contained by a series of larger geopolitically determined places in the shape of concentric circles that are not so circular. The annex of Pacchanta is part of the district of Ocongate which itself is just one of the many districts that make up the province of Quispicanchis. To continue zooming out in scale, Quispicanchis is just one of the many provinces that compose the greater department of Cusco. The city of Cusco, of course, is the capital of this department, and this department is one of the many that make up the Peruvian state with Lima as its capital. Like the mountain that I have been describing, nation-states are characterised by a series of hierarchically encompassing containers in which differences and distinctions are encompassed and contained by sameness.
and identification, and the more distinctions and sets of relations that are contained within and converge upon any given unit, the more _animu_ or power that unit has.

Currently, the capital city of Lima is the centre that strives to hold together the Peruvian state; however, as de la Cadena notes, “ever since Peru became an independent country in the nineteenth century, elites from Lima and Cuzco have vied for national leadership” (2015: 20). She explains: “Limeños proudly identified themselves with Catholic values, formal education in Spanish, and coastal access to the world. Against it, the Cuzqueño political class argued that they had a deeper and more authentic nationalism rooted in pre-Hispanic Inca ancestry and verified by the regional elite’s proficiency in the Quechua language” (ibid.). However, this source of pride among the Cuzqueño elite for their “indigenous past” is simultaneously a source of shame (ibid.). In order to avoid the risk of being considered “too indigenous,” and discriminated against as a result, proficiency in Quechua for the Cuzqueño elite must also be accompanied by proficiency in Spanish. The movement back and forth between the fluid and permeable categories of “indigenous” and “mestizo” is a dynamic that I explore in Chapter Five.

The tourist industry in Cusco attempts to capitalise on the city’s “indigenous heritage” and “Inkan ancestry.” For anyone not aware upon arrival to the city, the tourist industry is quick to inform with countless brochures, statues, plaques, advertisements, buildings, and archaeological sites that Cusco is the former capital of the Inkan Empire. As commonly rehearsed in the advertising, the Inkan state organised the Cusco valley, as a microcosm of the whole empire, into four distinct sections called _suyus_. The city of Cusco was located at the site where these four sections converged, and the city was called Tahuantinsuyu, which literally means in Quechua, “the place where the four parts come together.” A building in the very centre of the city called Coricancha (“The Golden Enclosure”) marked the precise location where this convergence took place. The Spaniards later referred to this enclosed space as _Templo del Sol_ (“Temple of the Sun”), and the Church of Santo Domingo now stands on top of its remains today.

Also, as popularly advertised and heavily debated among scholars, from this “sacred centre” of Coricancha, a number of lines called _ceques_ were imagined to radiate out into the surrounding area (Aveni 1981; Bauer 1992, 1998; Chávez Ballón 1970; Dearborn and Schreiber 1986; Rowe 1985; Zuidema 1982, 1990). However, these lines were not only “imagined;” rather, they were guided by material places in the landscape called _wak’as_—a term which is often glossed as “shrines” but exceeds such a simple translation (Bray 2015). _Wak’as_ included a wide range of human-made objects such as buildings, canals, and tombs as well as
nonhuman-made features of the landscape such as boulders, springs, and caves. These “objects” and “places” were simultaneously powerful subjects who required sacrificial offerings from the human kinship networks that formed around them and depended on them for health and well-being (Bauer 1992, 1998). The spatial organisation of the *ceque* system simultaneously served in the social organisation of the Cuzco valley, and by extension, the whole empire (Bauer 1992, 1998; Rowe 1985; Zuidema 1982, 1990). As the lines and the *wak’as* that punctuated them extended out from the centre of Cusco, so did the presence of the State. *Ceques* and *wak’as* colonized space by making empty space into an Inkan place (Kosiba 2015; cf. Stevens 1954).

Zuidema (1982) proposes that *ceque* lines followed the paths of human sightlines toward the horizon and that *wak’as* marked the end of one horizon and the beginning of another. For this reason, *wak’as* were considered sacred; they were liminal places where gazes from different sides of a horizon intersected. This theory seems to suggest that the lines radiating out from Cusco were straight. Others, however, argue that the positions of the *wak’as* indicate that *ceque* lines moved in a zig-zagging pattern across the landscape (Bauer 1998; Niles 1987).

I highlight what may seem to be irrelevant details for a contemporary ethnography because the significance of vision, the intersection of gazes at places called *apachitas*, and zig-zagging patterns of movement across the mountain landscape are key themes that run throughout this thesis. Recall already from my description of the approach to the Quyllurit’i shrine that the knot-tying and whipping initiation ritual took place precisely where and when Apu Qolqepunku came into sight for the first time after a zig-zagging walk to the top of a hill. Details like this emerge in many other examples throughout this thesis.

I would also like to note that the significance of sight and seeing has been commented on by many ethnographers from the Amazonian context as well and helps to form the basis of Viveiros de Castro’s (1998) theory of perspectivism which I discuss in Chapter Two (cf. Ewart 2008; Rivière 1999; Surrallès 2003; Taylor 1993). Although I do not want to suggest too much continuity with Amazonian perspectivism or the Inkan past, this capacity to see and be seen from a particular place is an important aspect of ritual and everyday life in the Andean mountain environment today. A person’s position in the landscape helps to determine that person’s relation to others in many different ways. This emphasis on place and vision also highlights the centrality of the human body in different constructions of personhood that is common to many indigenous societies throughout South America (Seeger, Da Matta, Viveiros de Castro 2019 [1979]).
The organisational structure of the ceque system has often been compared to the pattern of a record-keeping device made out of knotted cords that the Incans used called a quipu, and depending on how a quipu is laid out and displayed, it may be used to bolster different theories about straight lines and zig-zags (Abercrombie 1998; Bauer 1992, 1998; Kosiba 2015; Rowe 1946; Salomon 2004; Zuidema 1990). The following is an image of a quipu laid out in straight lines:

In Pathways of Memory and Power, Abercrombie explains the function of a quipu; he writes:
Quipus are well-known to have served as a device for counting and accounting; they were also clearly used to account for the ritual obligations of social groups to wak’as along the ceque to which they were assigned (and which may have served too as a kind of border defining their lands). Quipus could thus be used as a kind of social calendar (1998: 178-179).

However, taking suggestions from others and pushing this understanding of the quipu a bit further, Abercrombie continues:

It seems likely that in encoding numeric amounts of certain groups’ sacrificial obligations to wak’as along ceques, quipus might also have served as iconic representations of ceques themselves; the form of the quipu, a main cord from which a series of secondary cords depend, the latter segmented by groups of knots, itself recalls the shape of the ceque system (ibid.).

The ceque system is like a gigantic network of knotted cords laid out over the territory claimed by the Inkan state. The cords are the ceque lines, and the knots are the wak’as. It is a hierarchical system that links many different peoples and places together into a single whole through the principle of encompassment and containment.

The most heavily travelled line in and out of Cusco today (besides airlines) is the Interoceanic Highway, but unlike ceques, this road does not begin and end in Cusco; rather, it merely passes through Cusco, treating the city as just another centre among many others along the way. On the Interoceanic Highway, Cusco is no longer the “navel of the world” as it was for the Inkans; rather, it is just another dot on the map, freckle on the body, or knot on the quipu cord.

The Interoceanic Highway is the main road that links Cusco to the two most important places that I am discussing in this thesis: Pacchanta and the Quyllurit’i shrine. From Pacchanta, the highway can be reached in about two to three hours by foot or thirty to forty-five minutes by car along a bumpy dirt road. Once on the highway, it is about another three or four hours to Cusco. On the other side of the highway from Pacchanta and a little farther east, this highway is also the closest paved road to pass the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine. As I discuss in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, the construction of this road has contributed to an explosion in the number of people who can attend the pilgrimage festival. However, while the highway has enabled the inclusion of more pilgrims from farther away, it has simultaneously excluded the participation of many of the people who live closest to the shrine such as those in Pacchanta. There is no longer a comparsa (“group of pilgrims”) from Pacchanta that brings its demanda (“icon”) to the shrine anymore for the main festival which takes place just before the Catholic feast of Corpus Christi. Instead, the comparsa from Pacchanta, as well as others from the local district of Ocongate, bring their demandas a month earlier during the feast of the Ascension,
which is a much smaller occasion, and many use the bigger event as an opportunity to make some cash by doing things such as renting horses and selling food to the tens of thousands of pilgrims coming from many different places around Peru and beyond.

The Interoceanic Highway is called “Interoceanic” because it is said to “connect” or “link” the Pacific Ocean on the coast of Peru to the Atlantic Ocean on the coast of Brazil, traversing east and west across the entire continent (Harvey & Knox 2015). Moving from three different ports on the coast of Peru and making its way east, through and over the Andes, the section of the highway that passes close to Pacchanta and the shrine includes the highest mountain pass, at 5200 metres, on the whole highway. Leaving the Hualla Hualla mountain pass, the road then begins its long and winding descent toward the city of Puerto Maldonado in the Amazonian basin and further on toward the border of Brazil. Having now crossed the Andean mountains and into the Amazon, the highway then diverges to makes its long way across Brazil toward two different ports on the Atlantic in the north and south of the country. The following map taken from Harvey & Knox (2015) shows the promised connectivity of the highway:

![Map of the Interoceanic Highway](image)

At this scale, Pacchanta and the Quyllurit’i shrine are located “just off the road” about halfway between Cusco and the border of Brazil, at a high point in the Andes, before plunging down to the Amazon.

The construction of the Interoceanic Highway has a long and complex history that is built upon layers of pre-existing roads and decades of political debate about such a costly project (Harvey & Knox 2015). Rhetoric for the construction of the highway emphasised the possibilities for national integration; the proposed and imagined road was meant “to unify the nation” by incorporating its remote, diverse, and disparate parts. While unifying both Peru and
Brazil as independent nations, the road would also cross the border and strengthen relations between the two countries. And, at an even greater scale, the project looked further outward and saw how the road might allow the two countries greater access to markets in Asia and Europe from their ports on the Pacific and the Atlantic. In 2011, after decades of planning and building, former President Alan García officially inaugurated the road to mark its “completion” in Peru and celebrated it as a victory for “progress” and “modernization.” The section of the highway that passes near Pacchanta and the Quyllurit’i shrine was one of the last segments of the road to be completed, particularly given its “isolation” and the difficulty of building a road over “the top of the Andes.”

However, this region, of course, has never been totally “isolated.” It has always been connected to other places, simply in different ways and at different scales. Before becoming the “annex” that it is today, Pacchanta was part of a large hacienda (“agricultural plantation”) that was owned for roughly sixty years by different families of the Cusco elite (de la Cadena 2015). The name of the hacienda was Lauramarca, and the first title to it dates to 1904. The Lauramarca hacienda encompassed and contained a huge area of land—more than 81,000 hectares—located between 3,500 and 4,800 metres above sea level (de la Cadena 2015; Reátegui 1977). At this high altitude, few crops can grow, and raising livestock is difficult due to the lack of grazing pastures. Potatoes were and continue to be the most abundant crop, and herding sheep and alpacas was and is a common form of work.

During the time of the hacienda, the Runakuna (“Quechua-speaking peasants”) who lived on this land were required to work for the hacienda or pay rent for the plots of land that they were allocated (cf. Canessa 2012; Harris 2000). A number of strikes, conflicts, and massacres of Runakuna occurred throughout the first half of the twentieth century as a result of disputes concerning rightful ownership of the land (de la Cadena 2015). In the 1950s, the hacienda was bought by an Argentinian corporation that sought to reform the hacienda system and modernize the production process. This company was dedicated to the production of high-quality sheep wool which could be sold to international markets. In order to produce this high-quality wool, the company fenced off and enclosed the most productive areas of the land which led to a series of Runakuna evictions. Conflicts and violent confrontations regarding rightful ownership of the land continued in response to the enclosures and displacements.

In 1969, the Peruvian military government at the time decreed a nation-wide agrarian reform. This took place on June 24th, which since 1944, had been celebrated as El Día del Indio (“The Day of the Indian”). In 1969, the El Día del Indio became the El Día del Campesino (“The Day of the Peasant”). Following the agrarian reform, in 1970, the Lauramarca hacienda
was transformed into a state-owned cooperative of which the *Runakuna* became members called *socios*. It was also during this reform that annexes like Pacchanta were created and designated as “peasant communities.” Finally, in the 1980s, the *Runakuna* of the former Lauramarca *hacienda* dismantled the state-owned cooperative, evicted the administrators, and distributed the land among themselves. Marisol de la Cadena’s (2015) book, *Earth Beings*, recounts episodes of this struggle through the experience of one of the *Runakuna* leaders from Pacchanta named Mariano Turpo whom I discuss in Chapters One and Two.

While the eyes of the Peruvian state see Pacchanta as an annex and as a “peasant community,” and the eyes of the *hacendados* saw the land as their property and the people on it their workers, many of the *Runakuna* who help to compose places like Pacchanta see the relationship between people and place in a very different way. For many of my *Runakuna* interlocutors, Pacchanta is considered to be an *ayllu*. The concept of an *ayllu* is well-known in the Andean ethnographic literature. As de la Cadena (2015: 293 fn.3) reviews, it has been explained as:

A ‘local community or kin group’ (Sallnow 1987, 308); ‘a group of families’ (Ricard 2007, 449); a ‘polity self-formulated through ritual’ (Abercrombie 1998, 516); an ‘indigenous community or other social group whose members share a common focus’ (Allen 2002, 272); ‘distinguishable groups whose solidarity is formed by religious and territorial ties’ (Bastien 1978, 212); and a ‘kin group, lineage, or indigenous community with a territorial land base and members who share a common focus’ (Bolin 1998, 252).

Expanding upon these definitions of *ayllu*, one of de la Cadena’s interlocutors in Pacchanta explained the term in the following way: “ayllu is like a weaving, and all the beings in the world—people, animals, mountains, plants, etc.—are like the threads, we are part of the design. The beings in this world are not alone, just as a thread by itself is not a weaving, and weavings are with threads, a runa is always in-ayllu with other beings—that is ayllu” (2015: 44). Similar to Wagner’s (1991) idea of fractal personhood and Strathern’s (1988) concept of the dividual person, the human and nonhuman beings that compose an *ayllu* are constituted through their relations with others. In an *ayllu* there is no separation of the individual from society, the unit from the aggregate, or the person from the place.

From the very first time that I joined a communal assembly in Pacchanta in order to introduce myself to the *ayllu*, this relational aspect of the *ayllu* was key to how the idea was explained to me as well. However, as I came to understand over the course of fieldwork and beyond, not all of the relations that are established in *ayllu* are as symmetric and reciprocal as the image of the weaving might suggest. As I have been articulating, some of the
places/persons/entities in the weaving, like the knots on a quipu string or dots of cities on maps, are composed of more tightly condensed clusters or threads of relations than others, and it is at these sites of convergence where power and animu is concentrated. One of the preoccupations of ritual, then, is concerned with tapping into these sites of concentration and redistributing animu along less condensed lines. However, since these ritual techniques follow a logic of sacrifice, the unequally distributed structure is only reinforced and reproduced if no return is made. This is an ongoing dynamic of shifting power relations that takes place within the ayllu and with others outside of the ayllu. In contrast to a static structure that is fixed and bounded, the geosocial relations that I am describing in this thesis are continuously being produced, unmade, knotted, and unknotted over time (and space). It is an incipient form always in the process of becoming. In the next and final section of this Introduction, I would like to offer a few reflections on my own shifting place and position both inside and outside of the ayllu.

e. Ayllu Relationality and Fieldwork

Within the first couple of weeks that I arrived to Pacchanta, Lucio told me that there were rumours going around that I was there looking for gold to steal, and he started to laugh (cf. Harvey & Knox 2015). He then said, “But don’t worry, there’s an asamblea comunal (‘communal assembly’) in a few days, and we can sort things out.” As the day approached, I felt quite nervous and a bit worried that I might be told to leave. But again, Lucio reassured me it would be okay. He told me to bring a bag of bread and some coca leaves and that he would tell me who to give them to, which would help to smooth things out. So, when the morning of the assembly arrived, I walked to the meeting with Lucio, and following his instructions, gave away the bread and the coca leaves to the key people—first, of course, to Apu Ausangate.

I was then asked by the president of the assembly to introduce myself. Trying to make a good impression, I began in Quechua: “Allin p’unchay. Noqa sutiymi Daniel. Estadosunidosmanta kani (“Good day. My name is Daniel. I am from the United States”). At that point, I had only studied Quechua in Cusco for a month prior to going to Pacchanta, and I could not get much farther than that terribly low-level, so after a few more rehearsed phrases, I switched over into Spanish, which I can speak more proficiently. However, before proceeding with a description of that introduction, I would first like to comment on the use of Quechua and Spanish in Pacchanta and use that reflection to introduce the family with whom I was living.
During the time of my fieldwork, approximately ninety Runakuna families helped to compose the ayllu of Pacchanta, and for the majority, Quechua was the primary language spoken at home while Spanish was considered a second language. A person’s degree of proficiency in Spanish varied and was influenced by factors such as age, gender, and time spent away from Pacchanta. For example, in the family with whom I was living, Lucio, the middle-aged father, fluently spoke both Quechua and Spanish. Despite my best efforts to learn Quechua, my conversations with Lucio primarily took place in Spanish since it was always easier for us to fall back on the language that was more common between us. My low-level Quechua, however, seriously prevented me from engaging in more conversation with Sebastiana and Vinita, the mother and paternal grandmother of the family. Sebastiana could speak about as much Spanish as I could Quechua, so we got by with an interesting mix of the two, but I was not able to enter into as much conversation with her as I could with Lucio. Vinita, Lucio’s mother, is a monolingual Quechua speaker, and despite a few words and phrases here and there, our relationship played itself out mostly through non-verbal communication, or with Lucio acting as a translator. In addition to my own positionality as a male researcher and the expectations set on me by the ayllu that I engage in more activities with men than with women, my lack of Quechua prevented me from talking more with women which has contributed to a bit of a gender bias in this thesis.

Sebastiana and Lucio have five children, and like other young people in Pacchanta, are bilingual Quechua and Spanish speakers. Justa, the oldest, now lives in a different ayllu called Pinchimuro, which is located about a two-hour walk away, close to the Interoceanic Highway. Like many other Runakuna women such as Sebastiana, Justa moved to the ayllu of her husband when she got married. He works in construction, and she raises cuy (“guinea pig”) to sell in the market for consumption. Celia, the second-eldest of the family, spent about half of the time at home in Pacchanta and half of the time away. While at home, she assisted her parents with herding the alpacas and cooking and cleaning, and while away, she found short-term employment as a domestic worker in cities such as Cusco and Arequipa. The next in line is José, who similarly spent about half of the time in Pacchanta and half of the time away. While at home, he often worked as a guide for tourists who came to make treks around Ausangate, and while away from Pacchanta, he worked in informal mining, mostly for gold. Finally, Sandro and Vilma are the two youngest children who permanently lived at home when I was there. Sandro was in his last year of secondary school, and Vilma was just about to finish primary school and move on to secondary. The school that they attended is located in the centre of Pacchanta, and it was at that school where I introduced myself to the communal assembly.
I explained that I am a student doing research on Apus like Ausangate, and I asked for permission to live in Pacchanta for a year to do this. In response, a request from the assembly was put to me: could I teach English in the school to their children? If I was going to get something from them (in the form of knowledge), then they wanted something from me (knowledge of English in return). It was an example of a reciprocal form of exchange called ayni in Quechua. Requesting or even demanding that I give something in return was a way of socialising me into the moral make-up of the ayllu. Relating in a reciprocal way was a condition for my participation in the life of the ayllu. However, as I came to learn through this and many other examples, not all forms of ayni exchange take place between egalitarian actors, especially when dealing with non-ayllu members such as me. I secretly cringed at the idea of teaching English in the school because I thought it reeked of linguistic colonialism. However, given the unequal weight that values English over Quechua in the larger global economy, this was the request or demand put to me, so I accepted it and agreed to work as a part-time teacher in the school on a voluntary basis. Or perhaps, I should not say “voluntary.” Even though I was not paid, I did not exactly volunteer. It was rather a condition set on me by the ayllu if I was going to stay there.

Another factor that contributed to my permission to live in Pacchanta, and which in many ways led me to going there in the first place, was my identity as a Jesuit priest. I say “was” in the past tense because at the end of fieldwork, for a number of different reasons, I decided to leave the priesthood after having spent fourteen years in the Jesuit order—four of those years as an ordained priest. I told the assembly that I am a friend of Padre (“Father”) Antonio—a Jesuit priest who had been working in the area for the past thirty years or so—and that I would be helping him out with masses sometimes in the church in Ocongate where he lives. Some members of the assembly proceeded to ask me if I could say masses in Pacchanta from time to time. These requests, of course, came from the Catholic members of the ayllu whose religious practices tend to merge with those directed toward the Apus. But not all in the ayllu are Catholic. Many belong to an evangelical Christian church called Maranata which explicitly rejects practices directed to the Apus as well as participation in the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage. Movement back and forth between Catholic and Maranata identities is common within families. Then, there are people, of course, who are not religious at all, or people like Lucio who does not consider himself to be religious but does engage in relations with the Apus. He would also accompany me sometimes to masses in other peoples’ homes.

When I was asked at the communal assembly if I could say masses sometimes, I secretly cringed at the idea similar to my reaction to teaching English and had no interest in the ritual
labour whatsoever. I was there to do research about the *Apus*—not to be a missionary. If anything, I considered myself to be a missionary the other way around—not to teach people in Pacchanta about Christianity but to learn what they can teach me about the *Apus*, which I could then communicate to others through writing. However, since this was a request put to me, which I felt I could not refuse, I agreed to be available. As the year went along, I never took the initiative in organising any Catholic liturgies, but when people invited me to their homes to say a mass, I never refused. In addition to performing the regular Catholic mass, I discovered that people seemed to be even more interested in having me splash their houses and farms with holy water after the service. I was often told that there were many *malos vientos* or *malos espíritus* (“bad winds”) or (“bad spirits”) that they wanted me to drive away, which I write more about in Chapters One and Three.

My identity as a Jesuit also influenced the way in which I participated in the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage. I initially went on the pilgrimage in 2015 while I was studying theology in Bogotá, Colombia, and I made it the topic of my Masters dissertation. I was particularly interested in the role of the *ukukus* in taking the crosses to the glacier and the change in the practice of taking ice from it due to concerns for its melting. During that pilgrimage, in addition to being “baptised” into the pilgrimage, which I illustrated earlier in this introduction, I was also baptised as an *ukuku* at the edge of the glacier as I describe in later chapters. The connections that I made with people during that time set the foundation for the plans that I made to return in 2018 for more “proper” ethnographic fieldwork.

Among the fourteen months of fieldwork in connection to this PhD project, I spent the majority of the time in Pacchanta getting to know the family that I was living with by sharing in the daily activities of life around the house and around the *ayllu*. In anthropological terms, my method was immersive participant observation, or “deep hanging out.” I never engaged in any interviews nor “collected” any “data.” Any data that might be said to have been collected, as if it was already there ready to pick up and extract (c.f. Burman 2018), was not collected but was rather produced through my interactions and conversations with others in the midst of everyday life. Part of that knowledge production process also included the act of writing each day in my journal about whatever it was that happened to be going on. Although I certainly had my own interests and things I wanted to pursue, I tried to find a balance between steering the research and letting others steer me.

When I first met the Mandura-Pfacs family, to whom Padre Antonio introduced me, Lucio initially understood that I wanted to live with them because I wanted to learn how to be an alpaca herder so that I could raise alpacas back in the United States where I am originally
from. In many ways, he was right. I wanted to learn how to be an alpaca herder; it is just that I understood the results of that knowledge in a different way. From the very first day that Lucio thought that I wanted to learn how to be an alpaca herder, he adopted the role of my teacher and taught me many things such as who to give bread and coca leaves to at the communal assembly in order to gain their favour. Despite the language barrier, Vinita and Sebastiana played key parts as well. Among other things, they taught me how to weave which further helped to shape some of my thoughts about “flows” and “lines.” And, the whole idea about “containers of animu” was very much influenced by the day that Sebastiana taught me how to build an oven made out of rocks called a pachamanca which resembles a miniature mountain. Finally, conversations with the children during breakfast, lunch, and dinner with the family helped to illuminate the complexities of life in-ayllu and outside of it. Lucio’s brother, Graciano, who now lives in Cusco and returns occasionally to visit, spoke to this tension as well. I write about him in Chapter Five.

For all of the people who I have named up to this point (plus Enrique, my climbing partner from Pacchanta), I have chosen to use their real names and not pseudonyms. I have made this choice because quite frankly it’s difficult for me to imagine writing about them in any other way, and using their names does not really put them into any kind of risk. These are the people to whom I was closest and with whom I spent the majority of time. More than anyone else, they are the ones who most clearly understood the purpose of my research and gave consent to me writing about them and using their names. This is a kind of consent that was given from the outset and was continually built and reaffirmed over time through a certain amount of trust that developed in the relationship. However, my relationship with others in and around Pacchanta was not nearly as close, so for all the other names that appear in this thesis, I have chosen to use pseudonyms. I simply did not spend as much time with them to gain the level of consent needed to use their real names.

Another ethical issue concerns my access to the ayllu and the Mandura-Pfácsi family. My identity as a Jesuit priest and relationship to Padre Antonio certainly played a key role here. In many ways, as a priest, I was simply another fractal instance of Antonio, and since he was a trusted person to many in the area, so too was I, unless shown otherwise. However, while this put me into a privileged position with some, it had the exact opposite effect with others. For the evangelical Christian members of Pacchanta and those more generally sceptical of religious authorities, I was not necessarily a trusted person from the start and had to work even harder to develop a relationship if one was developed at all. Additionally, Pacchanta has recently become much more accessible given the growth of the tourism industry and construction of the
Interoceanic Highway. Having a foreigner around was not an unusual site. The only unusual thing about me was just that I stayed longer than the typical tourist—as one young girl asked after about a month of seeing me around, “Why are you still here?” Perhaps, the ethical issue now is not only why was I there and how did I get there but why did I leave and how can I give back. I’m still working on that return.

f. Summary of the Chapters

In Chapter One, “The Cosmic Polity,” I begin by describing the characteristics of lightning as a particular kind of person. A discussion of the ways in which lightning is a person leads me to a consideration of the category of “animism.” I address problems associated with classic formulations of the idea, and I review more recent debates about it. I then propose that if what I am describing might be considered to fall within the framework of animism, then it is a particular form of animism that is organised in a hierarchical way. I discuss the relationship between lightning and Apu Ausangate to explore this hierarchical form of relation, and I argue that the more powerful beings in the hierarchy encompass and contain greater concentrations of animi. I then show how ritual efforts are made to redistribute this animi along less congested lines but that they follow a logic of sacrifice which can end up reinstating the very structure that is being contested.

In Chapter Two, “Metapersons,” I develop the idea of Apu Ausangate as a “metaperson” (Sahlins 2017) by describing the spatial and temporal characteristics of the Apu’s body. First, I show how Ausangate’s body is scattered out across space and instantiated in a multiplicity of human and nonhuman forms. I then consider how the Apu’s body is also spread out across time and marks the transition from one epoch to the next. Ausangate was born during the colonial encounter between “King Inka” and “King Spain,” and he will die when the last chunks of ice disappear from his melting body. I then describe how changes in the mountain’s body are predictable through a particular type of weather forecasting system, and I conclude by discussing the mountain’s body in relation to Pachamama (“Mother Earth”) who is an even more hierarchically encompassing entity than Ausangate. Just as Ausangate contains many pieces, Ausangate is simply one piece of Pachamama.

In Chapter Three, “The Lord of Shining Snow,” I continue exploring this idea of “metapersonhood” by considering the fractal characteristics of Ausangate’s body in relation to the body of another metaperson—El Señor de Quyllurit’i—the boulder at the pilgrimage shrine. A metaperson is a “fractal person” (Wagner 1991), an entity that reproduces the same
versions of itself across different scales. Just as Ausangate is one piece of Pachamama, El Señor de Quyllurit’i is one piece of Ausangate, and the demandas (“icons”) that flow to and from the shrine are fractal extensions of themselves. I explore these ideas through ethnographic material from the pilgrimage shrine as well as within the context of a mass that I said at a home in the Catholic barrio (“neighbourhood”) of Pacchanta.

In Chapter Four, “At the Edge of a Melting Glacier,” I return to the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine and discuss a conflict at the edge of the glacier between different groups of ukukus concerning entrance onto the glacier, and I consider this conflict in relation to representations of climate change and indigenous people in the international media. I suggest that the conflict between the ukukus marks a shift in thinking of the glacier as a subject to thinking of the glacier as an object—one in need of human protection rather than one with whom to enter into relations of sacrificial exchange. I also show how these practices of protection are performances of indigeneity by ukukus from urban environments that conform to popular stereotypes of indigenous people as “protectors of the environment.” In this chapter, I argue that conflicting moral discourses about how humans should relate to the environment stem from conflicting ontological assumptions about what the environment is, and I proceed to situate contemporary debates about human-environment relations within a longer history of debates from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe that concerned the place and position of the human in the environment and within the cosmos as a whole.

In Chapter Five, “Runakuna, the Ukuku Mayor, and Carnaval,” I consider the meaning of the term Runakuna and how it relates to other human and nonhuman categories of belonging and identification. Through a discussion of a candidate for mayor of Cusco who used the image of the ukuku as part of his campaign as well as a reflection on the celebration of Carnaval, I show how belonging to a particular category of identification is not fixed and closed but rather open, dynamic, and ongoing. Being “indigenous” or “mestizo” and “human” or “nonhuman” are not static essences but rather the result of particular practices and sets of relations with others. As practices and ways of relating to others change, so too do different constructions of selves. In the chapter, I also consider the role of an organisation called rondas campesinas (“peasants rounds”) in policing the boundaries around different categories of belonging.

In Chapter Six, “Mimesis, Miniatures, and Mountains,” I return to the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine one last time to explore the ways in which selves are constructed through the “mimetic faculty” (Benjamin 1995). I discuss mimesis as a way of imitating or copying another in order to incorporate some of the animu or power that alter has (Taussig 2018 [1993]; Willerslev 2004). I argue that mimesis follows a logic of representation as well as participation
in which there is both a continuity and a discontinuity between “the copy” and “the original.” The relation is both metaphorical (representation and discontinuity) and metonymical (participation and continuity). Throughout the chapter, I follow a number of examples that illustrate how the animu of alterity is incorporated into the self, and in the process, new selves (and others) are formed. Once again, the geosocial structure that I am describing is an incipient form always in the process of becoming.

Finally, in the Conclusion, I use one last photograph of another miniature version of Ausangate in order to summarize and reflect on the main ideas and points of this thesis. The miniature of Ausangate was such an ordinary part of everyday life that I came to take it for granted, and I forgot all about it until looking back at some old photographs as I prepared to write a conclusion. The miniature is a “replica” of Ausangate that Lucio built around the water tap outside the house where we would cook and eat. He told me that the water comes directly from Ausangate, so he built a “model” of the mountain around the tap in order to represent this. On the day that my brother who was visiting from Alabama took the photograph, the water dripping from the tap was frozen solid. As I explain in the Conclusion, in many ways, the image encapsulates this thesis. The next chapter begins inside that house where we would cook and eat.
Chapter 1: The Cosmic Polity

a. Characteristics of Lightning

One day in early January, I was eating lunch with Sebastiana and Vinita when lightning suddenly struck, loud and close to the house. Sebastiana, the mother of the family that I was living with, jumped up, unplugged the radio, turned off the lights, and rushed outside to collect the laundry drying on the rocks. Vinita, the paternal grandmother, took a metal bowl off the shelf, put some coals in it from the fire, sprinkled some sugar on top, and placed the smoking bowl on a boulder just outside the door. She then grabbed a cup full of water and threw the water into the air. She came back inside the house and said to me in Spanish, “agua bendita,” which means holy water. When Lucio, the father of the family, returned later that day from herding alpacas, the lightning storm had cut off electricity to the house. He commented to me, “When lightning wants to cut off the power, it cuts it off. When lightning wants to kill an alpaca, it kills. When lightning wants to kill a person, it kills. And when lightning wants to destroy a house, it destroys.” Lightning is a “ratero,” he said in Spanish slang, a “rat-like thief” who steals electricity, livestock, human life, and homes. Unplugging the radio, turning off the lights, burning sugar, and throwing holy water into the air are a few of the ways to protect oneself against this thief.

In this chapter I begin by describing in further detail the characteristics of lightning, and I show how lightning is a person with intentionality, a body, a home, and a name. This consideration of “nonhuman personhood” (Hallowell 1960) leads me to propose that an animist ontological disposition underpins much of daily life in the village of Pacchanta, and I review “old” and “new” debates on the topic. I then analyse the relationship between lightning and a powerful sentient mountain named Ausangate to argue that a hierarchical form of animism is at work in the Andes. Within this hierarchically arranged “cosmic polity,” more powerful beings possess a greater amount of a vitalizing energy or “life-force” called animu, and a central preoccupation of daily life is the redistribution of this animu through reciprocal yet asymmetric modes of relation. While this redistribution at least helps to keep animu moving, the process is built on a sacrificial logic which can sometimes end up reinforcing and even exacerbating the hierarchical structure in which animu flows.

Lightning, like human persons, has intentions, will, emotions, and desires. During the rainy season, which lasts from October to March, lightning is the most bravo, that is, angry, in November and December. When storm clouds gather, a mountain grass called ichu is regularly
burned and cigarette smoke is blown toward the clouds because lightning is afraid of smoke. Fireworks are shot at it on occasion in order to break up the clouds and expel the lightning. When I saw Lucio buying three-foot long rockets from his sister-in-law one day at a village assembly, I asked what they were for, and he told me, to “defendemos contra los rayos,” that is, to defend ourselves against the lightning. In the past, a person called an arariwa was given the job of protecting animals, crops, and humans against destructive forces of the environment like lightning, but now, with a growing sense of private ownership of the land within the collective, this is no longer an appointed position in the community; instead, as Lucio said, “we are all arariwas.”

Alongside its feelings and emotions, lightning has a home and a body. It comes from a lake called Uturungu, the Quechua word for jaguar. I was told that in the past there was a golden pitcher at the bottom of this lake, but it is gone now because some Chileans stole it. Before the golden pitcher was taken, Uturungu was very dangerous. If you got too close, the lake would pull you in and drown you. But now, Uturungu has become “tame,” and it is safe to approach. Lightning has another home near Lake Sigrenacocha where a gold mine is located. The informal gold mine, situated at the border between two Quechua-speaking communities, is no longer operational. After a dispute regarding ownership rights, the conflict was resolved through the decision that no one can extract the gold. When lightning leaves its home from the high lakes, it falls toward the earth in the form of a small metallic ball made of iron. As it descends from the sky in q’engo, zig-zag pattern, which is a symbol of transformation and change in Quechua iconography and weaving patterns (Poole 1990), the falling iron ball leaves flashes of light in its wake. A place that has been struck by lightning is called qhaqha. Sometimes burned marks are visible on the surface of the earth analogous to the fractal patterns of a tree, vein, or river system. These sites cause sickness and disease for humans and animals and are responsible for killing newly born alpacas. Gold is often said to be located in these places as a result of the lightning strike.

As part of its personhood, lightning has various names. For the Inkans, lightning was a manifestation of the “weather god” Illapa who was also the god of war, the god of trade, and the god of death (Gade 1983). During the time of the Conquest, the Inkans referred to the guns and canons used by the Spanish as Illapa, presumably given the destructive power and booming sound of both weapons and lightning (Staller & Stross 2013). Alongside the Spanish words rayo and relámpago, the most common word that I heard for lightning was chikchi, which is

---

2 In Chapter Four, I relate a story about a city that is buried at the bottom of this lake.
also the Quechua word for hail. At such a high altitude, lightning and hail almost always go together, making them nearly indistinguishable and equally powerful in their ability to destroy.

In the past, Lucio told me, people called lightning Mariano, which is a name of admiration and affection often reserved for powerful persons. For example, an important “shaman” from Pacchanta, who led an agrarian reform against the hacienda system in the 1960s was named Mariano (de la Cadena 2015). Mariano was also the name of a young shepherd who saw an apparition of Christ in 1780 during the time of a major rebellion against the Spanish colonial government (Sallnow 1987). The site of that apparition now forms the centre for the largest pilgrimage in the Peruvian Andes called Quyllurití. And finally, Ausangate, a glaciated mountain whose north face rises above Pacchanta to an elevation of 6384 metres above sea level is sometimes called Mariano. Ausangate is a sentient mountain who is considered to be the most powerful “earth-being” in the region, a being who is said to own the alpacas and to control the fate of the humans who live within his jurisdiction (de la Cadena 2015). I say “his” jurisdiction because Ausangate is indeed described as male. But not all earth-beings are male; Ausangate’s wife, Callangate, for example, lives in the next district over and is in charge of that territory, although her power, being a smaller mountain, is not as great, a point to which I will later return.

While Mariano is a name of admiration and affection for powerful persons, now, Lucio told me, people don’t “respect” lightning anymore with the dignified name of Mariano; instead, they call lightning saqra, a Quechua word that my interlocutors translated as diablo in Spanish, which means “devil” in English. However, unlike the devil in the Judeo-Christian tradition, saqras are not pure evil; they are more ambiguous beings that contain the capacity to create as well as to destroy. Referring to the work of Absi (2005) on the Potosí mines in Bolivia, Peter Gose describes saqras as “wild and unsocialized but fertile forces” (2018a: 493). Saqras are powerful beings with whom negotiation and bargaining is impossible because they are “de-personified forces” utterly beyond the realm of human sociality (Gose 2018a). This de-personified aspect makes saqras different from the devil that Taussig (1980) analyses in his book about plantation workers and miners in South America who enter into contract relations with the devil. Although saqras may not be like humans, I found during the time of my fieldwork that humans sometimes imitate saqras. For example, on the Catholic feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross in the nearby town of Ocongate, people dressed as saqras in devilish masks hissed from the balconies above the central plaza and mimicked sex with each other as pilgrims processed around the town square carrying the body of Christ.
Lightning, like a *saqra*, causes destruction, violence, and death, but it is simultaneously productive and generative. When lightning strikes the ground, I was informed that the vibration causes mushrooms to emerge which we would occasionally collect, eat, and enjoy. However, alpacas, which have been directly killed by lightning are not eaten. When I first arrived to Pacchanta, a farmer upstream had tossed an alpaca that had been struck by lightning into the river, and as it made its way downstream, its carcass became wedged in between some rocks that form a bridge over the water. This bridge is called *saqra chaka*, “devil’s bridge,” and human-eating monsters called *sirenas* live underneath it. I was told that these monsters look like blonde-haired *gringas*, “white women,” with the tail of a fish, and they are especially dangerous at night. For the year that I spent in Pacchanta, I would often cross this rock bridge to access a trail that connects the upper valley to the main village centre. In addition to being used by the local people to move their alpacas up and down the valley, this trail is also heavily used by tourists as part of a popular trek around Ausangate.

Lightning does not only kill alpacas but humans too. While eating breakfast, lunch, or dinner with my host family, I would often hear on the radio news reports about the latest person who had been struck and killed by lightning. I tried to hold back tears one day when Vinita’s sister brought me to her old home with a missing roof and scorched black walls and said, “This is where my husband was killed by lightning last year.” The news reports on the radio suddenly became more real. However, not everyone who is struck by lightning dies. If a person is lucky enough to survive a lightning strike, she or he is considered to become the highest form of shaman, a person who knows how to read coca leaves through divination. While visiting the lower part of Pacchanta, I met a woman, named Barbara, who had been struck. Her husband, Simeon, told me that her heart stopped for several minutes, and she quit breathing. Then, suddenly, her eyes opened, and Barbara came back to life. I asked if she was now an *altomisayuq*, the highest form of shaman. They both laughed and agreed, “No, but maybe a *pampamisayuq,*” which refers to a type of shaman that is not quite as powerful.

*Alto* is the Spanish word for “high” and *misa* refers to the Catholic liturgy called the mass. *Misa* also refers to the *mesa* “table” that is used to give ritual offerings to powerful mountains like Ausangate. This “table” is a handwoven rectangular cloth that is used on a daily basis to carry coca leaves and used on more ceremonial occasions to give offerings to the mountains. *Yuq* is the Quechua suffix to indicate possession. So, an *alto-misa-yuq*, is “a person who possesses the high mass/coca-carrying-cloth.” In other words, an *altomisayuq* is a person who has the highest form of ritual authority. A *pampamisayuq*, on the other hand, is less powerful than an *altomisayuq*. *Pampa* is a Quechua word that means flat, referring, for
example, to a flat plain. In a vertical and hierarchical social landscape, a *pampamisayuq* is not as high, and therefore, not as powerful as an *altomisayuq*. This corresponds to the mountains as well in which the highest mountains are regarded as the most powerful ones. Suspecting gender inequality in Barbara’s case, I asked why she was not an *altomisayuq*, and I was told, like on many other occasions, that there aren’t any *altomisayuqs* left—only *pampamisayuqs* and “regular” ones who often visit with tourists. I heard on several occasions that Mariano Turpo, the leader of the agrarian reform in the 1960s, was the last *altomisayuq*, and as recounted by de la Cadena (2015), he also has a story of being struck by lightning. But given the agency of lightning, being “chosen” by lightning rather than “struck” may be a more fitting description.

b. Animism “Old” and “New”

I arrived in Pacchanta in December, a month in which lightning is the most aggressive, mean, and dangerous. Within just a couple of weeks, it became apparent to me that lightning is something to pay attention to because it is a daily topic of conversation (at least during the rainy season) and clearly important for my interlocutors. So, I began to ask questions about lightning and to think about its significance. One of the first things that occurred to me was a simple confirmation of what I had already read in Andean ethnographic literature; that is, the human characteristics of elements in the natural environment such as lightning, lakes, rocks, and mountains suggest that an animist ontology underpins much of daily life (e.g. Allen 2016; Sillar 2009). In learning and thinking more about the specificity of lightning, however, I began to see that a particular form of animism is at work, one that is organized in a hierarchical way. In focusing my attention on lightning, I started to see how the way in which people relate to lightning parallels the way in which they relate to other more powerful humans in a hierarchical form of relation. In addition to lightning being an important topic of conversation for my interlocutors, I chose to focus on lightning because I found it “good to think with” (Lévi-Strauss 1963 [1962]), particularly about power and the hierarchical configurations between persons, both human and nonhuman. But, before discussing the hierarchical form of animism in the

---

3 Whether or not Mariano was struck by lightning remains an unresolved question for de la Cadena. Sometimes Mariano claimed that he was struck or “grabbed” and sometimes not. De la Cadena comments that “this nonsettled characteristic of the story was an important feature of Mariano’s narratives about his relations with earth-beings” (2015:55). This nonsettledness and non-fixity of things, she says, characterises much of her time in Pacchanta. In a similar spirit of nonsettled things, de la Cadena says that Mariano referred to himself as a *pampamisayuq*, but many of the people during the time of my fieldwork, say he was an *altomisayuq*, the “last one” even.
Andes, I would first like to contextualize the term animism within “old” and “new” debates on the topic because the term has certain connotations from which I would like to distance myself.

Animism as a category of analysis has a long and complicated history within anthropology. Nurit Bird-David claims, “animism, which E.B. Tylor developed in his 1871 masterwork *Primitive Culture*, is one of anthropology’s earliest concepts, if not the first” (1999: s67). Tylor proposed that animism is the basic building block and earliest form of religion, which he defined as “the belief in spiritual beings” (1958 [1871]). He claims that religion seeks to explain aspects of human existence that are difficult to understand, especially death, but in its quest for explanation, religion is a “bad science” that falls short of “reality.” For example, faced with the difficult question, “Why do humans die?”, Tylor proposed that “early humans” invented the idea of the soul. As “primitive scientists,” early humans theorized the existence of a spiritual essence that is part of the body but that is also detachable and separate from the body. The soul is that which leaves the body at death and causes the body to decay, and correspondingly, the soul is that which exists within the living body and causes it to grow. A human being is a visible body with an invisible soul.

Based on the observation that other things in the natural world grow, die, and decay like humans, such as roses, oak trees, and caribou, Tylor claims that early humans made the logical connection that other things must have souls too. This makes sense, he said, in a basic way. For Tylor, the attribution of souls to humans and other elements of the material world is an entirely logical and rational way of thinking. However, Tylor thought that animism and more “sophisticated” religious developments of it such as monotheism are ultimately erroneous and will eventually be replaced by the “truths” of the emerging secular science of his day. One key truth of this secular science is that the soul does not exist; the soul, including God, the supreme soul, is not the cause of growth and decay. Life and death are governed by impersonal and non-intentional laws as described and explained by scientific disciplines such as biology, physics, chemistry, and geology.

Influenced by the evolutionist theories of the nineteenth century, Tylor understood human civilization to be on a track from the primitive to the modern. He claims that “animism characterizes tribes very low in the scale of humanity” (1958 [1871]: 9); furthermore, the traces of this animism can still be seen in modern religion, which will ultimately be replaced by science, the marker of modernity. He equates animism and primitive thought to the mind of a child, and just as a child grows to more complex ways of thinking so too does humanity grow to more sophisticated levels of development. Given the evolutionist model in which Tylor’s
theory of animism is framed, his theory is unacceptable today, and the term animism is haunted by his presence with connotations of racism, colonialism, and Social Darwinism.

Tylor’s theory is also outdated for the way in which it projects an ethnocentrically Western concept of the soul onto other contexts. In the case of the Andes, for example, lightning and other features of the environment such as rocks, mountains, and lakes do not have souls; rather, they have animu. As described by my interlocutors and as discussed in some of the Andean ethnographic literature, animu is a type of “life-force” or “cosmic energy” that permeates all things, human and nonhuman, and gives them the ability to sense, to move, and to perceive (e.g. Allen 2016; de la Cadena 2015; Ricard Lanata 2007; Salas Carreño 2016). Animu flows through everything in the material world including humans, animals, plants, and minerals alike, while the soul, on the other hand, which is called alma, is exclusive to humans.

One of the key differences between the soul and animu is that animu cannot exist forever apart from a particular body. Allen writes, “unlike the Christian notion of the soul, this animu has no eternal existence independent of the body. Animu and kirpu (body, from the Spanish cuerpo) are distinct but mutually constitutive elements; neither can survive long without the other” (2016: 430). Relying on the work of other ethnographers as well, Allen notes that animu might leave the body when a person is sleeping, sick, angry, or afraid, but it always returns to the body, making a thak sound when it reunites (Allen 2016; Arnold and Yapita 1998; Ricard Lanata 2007). During the time of my fieldwork, Lucio described to me how his animu left him for as many as ten years until it returned. It left him one day in his late twenties after he saw an alpaca diminish in size and disappear into a rock. For many years after, he was unable to work at his fullest potential and the medicine at the clinic in the town of Ocongate did nothing for him. His animu was not finally restored and revitalised until he drank some tea that a shaman prepared for him. Whether or not Lucio’s animu made a thak sound when it reunited with his body, I didn’t catch. All this is to say, and as I will further elaborate later in this chapter, animu is not the same as the Christian idea of the soul. Animu is not exclusive to humans, and it does not have an eternal existence separate from a particular body. Although animu might leave the body for a period of time, it must return, and, as the body to which it is attached perishes, dissipates, and disappears, so too does it.

Rather than think of animu as a soul that things either have or do not have, it is more helpful to think of it as a kind of “charge” that varies in levels of intensity. Lucio also explicitly related it to sexuality one day—not directly to human sexuality but to the sex drive of an alpaca. When he brought a male alpaca into a corral one day to mate with a female that Sebastiana had brought into the corral in advance, the female kept kicking off the male and running away.
After several failed attempts and much struggle on the part of Sebastiana and Lucio to make the alpacas mate, the male was finally returned to a separate corral and was replaced with a different male who proceeded to successfully mate with the same female. When I helped Lucio return the male who could not mate to the separate corral, Lucio said to me, “no tiene bastante animu” (“he doesn’t have enough animu”). Lucio then told me that the alpaca can’t mate because he is not eating enough grass and that the grass that he is eating is not good quality. However, he hoped that some new grass that was growing and almost ready for consumption would solve the problem and the alpaca’s animu would be restored. Unlike a Christian concept of a soul, things do not simply have animu or not, but they have it in varying degrees and levels intensity. I was also told that a fresh bottle of Coca-Cola has a lot of animu, but it loses it when the bubbles go down and the Coke goes flat.

Given the ethno-soul-centric and evolutionist way in which Tylor’s theory of animism is framed, the concept has been highly criticized and in many ways rejected; however, the topic of animism has recently seen a resurgence of interest and a re-evaluation based on more recent ethnographic work and a resurrection of the old corpus of literature that was once proclaimed dead. Describing the “New Animism,” Århem writes, “old ethnographic texts are resuscitated and interpreted anew in light of the revitalized concept, yielding fresh insights into non-modern ontologies and epistemologies as well as contributing to the reshaping of the concept itself” (2016: 3). Unlike Tylor, the scholars engaged in the New Animism do not dismiss animism as “bad science” nor as an “early stage” in human and cultural development; rather, they take animism seriously for the challenges and potentialities that it offers, especially the promises that it offers in rethinking human-environment relations beyond the modernist framework inherited from the Enlightenment (e.g. Århem 2016; Hornborg 2006; Ingold 2000, 2011).

One of the leading figures who has come to be associated with the New Animism is Philippe Descola. In Beyond Nature and Culture, Descola (2013) situates animism as one of the four ontological configurations available for different human collectives. The other three alternatives are totemism, naturalism, and analogism. In doing this, Descola relativizes the modernist framework of naturalism as just one option among other equally valid theories. Descola proposes that the four ontological configurations are based on the degree to which continuity and discontinuity between interiority and physicality is stressed. Interiority refers to properties such as “intentionality, subjectivity, reflexivity, feelings, and the ability to express oneself and to dream” (Descola 2013: 116). In other words, interiority is the mind, the spirit, the soul, consciousness, or anything that enables life to go about. “Physicality, in contrast, concerns external form, substance, the physiological, perceptive and sensorimotor processes,
even a being’s constitution and way of acting in the world” (Descola 2013: 116). Physicality is a piece of gold in a rock, the tooth of an animal, and a human fingernail. The interiority of these physical elements is that which enables them to grow and to decay. Based on these two fundamental categories of physicality and interiority, Descola argues that, at the greatest level of abstraction, there are only four possible systems of classification that result.

Animism is an ontological system that proposes continuity at the level of interiority and discontinuity at the level of physicality. Same mind, different bodies. Naturalism stands in an inverse relationship to Animism. Naturalism proposes continuity at the level of physicality and discontinuity of interiority. Same body. Different minds. Totemism stresses continuity of physicality and continuity of interiority. Same body. Same mind. And, opposite to Totemism is Analogism, which emphasizes discontinuity of physicality and discontinuity of interiority. Different bodies. Different minds. The following grid illustrates the idea:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similar interiorities</th>
<th>Animism</th>
<th>Totemism</th>
<th>Similar interiorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissimilar physicalities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dissimilar physicalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissimilar interiorities</td>
<td>Naturalism</td>
<td>Analogism</td>
<td>Dissimilar interiorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar physicalities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dissimilar physicalities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. The four ontologies (Descola 2013)

Although I find Descola’s model admirable for its attempt to relativize naturalism as just one of the various ontological configurations available, and thus not “superior” to any other in an evolutionist way of thinking, there is a fundamental problem with his model: the whole framework is based on naturalism and rests on a basic distinction between physicality and interiority. As Tim Ingold writes, “from the outset, Descola insists that naturalism is but one scheme of the ontological four-fold, and should not be taken as the yardstick by which others are judged. As the work proceeds, however, it becomes ever more apparent that this is precisely how the others are being judged” (2016: 305-306). Ingold continues: “Naturalism, in short, is not so much a variety of tacit knowledge as a machine for producing it, for naturalising the ontological regimes of the Other—regimes that might otherwise challenge the monopoly of its own way of working” (2016: 308). A conceptual model that relies on the distinction between physicality and interiority is an inadequate tool of analysis for ontologies in which that distinction does not exist.
A similar critique may be made of Viveiros de Castro’s (1998) theory of perspectivism which I discuss more in the next chapter. Like Tylor’s and Descola’s theories of animism, perspectivism also relies on a fundamental Cartesian distinction between subject and object, culture and nature, mind and body (Course 2010; High 2018; Ramos 2012). It simply inverts the “Western” way of typically talking about these categories. For example, instead of one nature and many cultures, perspectivism operates based on a logic of one culture (one human way of seeing things) and many natures (different bodies being seen from the same perspective). However, even though the content is inverted, the theory still operates within the same dichotomous structure. Deductive models like this built on the anthropologist’s own theoretical framework fall short as explanatory models in ethnographic contexts where such dichotomies do not exist.

However, that does not mean that the conceptual framework of the theories has to be dismissed all together. Nor is it even possible given how entrenched the dichotomy is between body and soul, physicality and interiority in the discipline of anthropology. Despite my admiration for the ideal of Husserl’s (2012 [1913]) notion of *epoché*, conceptual biases cannot be totally bracketed and set aside in order to attend to the phenomenon or “datum” that presents itself. Such a detached and objective position as if the ethnographer was a blank slate simply waiting to be impressed upon and informed is not possible. So instead, I support a method that treats one’s pre-existing theories and biases as tentative frameworks that are open to being challenged and expanded when put into conversation with other ways of being and knowing. And, it is in this encounter between selves and others where differences and similarities emerge—for example, to see the ways in which a naturalist might have animist tendencies and an animist, naturalist ones as well, and so on. These classification systems are not clearly bounded and discrete categories, but rather, general ontological dispositions that tend to give weight to one side of the spectrum more than the other. In the course of single day, a person might flip back and forth between any number of ontological positions. In this spirit, I will now return to “my own ethnographic material” that emerged from conversations with my interlocutors, and I will put it into conversation with the animism debates in order to contribute to an expanded notion of animism which may be described as hierarchical.

But first, one last point: the commonplace idea of using “ethnographic material” in order to “advance anthropological theory” further shows just how entrenched the discipline of anthropology is in a naturalistic framework however far some people, like myself, might desire to escape it. Moving beyond dichotomies such as body and soul, exteriority and interiority, nature and culture, is not so easy within a discipline that is entirely based on the analogous and
corresponding categories of ethnography and theory (Ingold 2014). Even calling it “my own ethnographic material” as if I was the proprietorial owner further reflects this bias of naturalism which is based on a hierarchical division between the material as a subordinate object and me as the sovereign subject. Having noted this, now I will return to “my fieldwork” and describe a different cosmology in which humans are not at the top of the social hierarchy but are rather contingent creatures dependent on and governed by more powerful nonhuman persons.

c. Hierarchical Animism

Standing at 6,384 metres above sea level (more or less), Ausangate is a sentient mountain who dominates the landscape in and around Pacchanta and is considered to be the most powerful “earth-being” in the region, a being who owns and controls all life within his territory (de la Cadena 2015). The giant mountain can be seen as far away as the city of Cusco, 80 kilometres, “as the crow flies,” to the west. One of the reasons that Ausangate is considered to be the most powerful Apu (“Lord”) in the Cusco region is because Ausangate is the highest snow-capped peak in the area. Commenting on Ausangate and other place-based beings, Catherine Allen writes, “power and authority of places expand as their vision expands, with the greatest authority literally being the highest snow-capped peaks, who can see and be seen over the widest region; lower hills are visible over a smaller territory, and so forth, until one reaches the house (wasitira) at the most localized level” (2015: 34).

As Allen suggests, the power that results from the vertical height of a mountain involves a horizontal dimension as well. Standing above all the other mountains, Ausangate can see the farthest outward and be seen by the widest region. Everything that falls under the gaze of the mountain is included within the mountain’s domain and jurisdiction. Ausangate encompasses and contains a vast territory within his horizontal sight lines due to the mountain’s higher position on a vertical axis. This position then makes Ausangate not just at the top of the hierarchy but at the centre. At the top and at the centre, everything flows from Ausangate, and as I will explain, everything must flow back into the mountain as well in order to keep “the cosmos” circulating.

Animism in the Andes is not of the egalitarian type which tends to characterize the literature on animism in lowland South America (e.g. Descola 2013; Viveiros de Castro 1998); rather, animism in the Andean mountains, is vertical and hierarchical. The link here between cosmology and landscape might suggest that flat landscape = egalitarian society and vertical landscape = hierarchical society. But, of course, the correspondence is not so simple and
lands. The landscapes do not simply determine cosmologies. In fact, as Sahlins (2017) has recently observed, even the most “egalitarian” of societies are not really egalitarian at all because these societies are governed by transcendent “metapersons,” often called “spirits,” who exist higher in the hierarchy than humans and who control “the life-giving means of people’s existence” (2017: 92). Following Hocart’s lead, Sahlins calls this system of government in which humans are subordinate to the metapersons who govern them a “cosmic polity,” a system that involves “the coparticipation of humans with gods, ghosts, animal-persons, and others in the same complex society” (2017: 104).

Hocart (1970 [1936]) claims that these cosmic polities are the original models on which modern systems of government are built. In the preface to Kings and Councillors, Hocart writes:

The machinery of government was blocked out in society long before the appearance of government as we now understand it. In other words, the functions now discharged by king, prime minister, treasury, public works, are not the original ones; they may account for the present form of these institutions, but not for their original appearance. They were originally part, not of a system of government, but of an organization to promote life, fertility, prosperity by transferring life from objects abounding in it to objects dependent on it (1970 [1936]: 3).

With this assertion, as Sahlins (2017) observes, Hocart turns traditional anthropological thinking on its head: instead of thinking of cosmology as a reflection of sociology, via Durkheim, sociology is rather a reflection of cosmology. Sahlins puts the matter this way: “kings are human imitations of gods, rather than gods of kings” (2017: 92). Within a cosmic polity, spirits and gods control the resources, and the primary preoccupation for humans is to usurp, transfer, and distribute the life that these resources contain through ritual practices. Modern systems of government are based on this older, “original political society” governed by metapersons (ibid.).

Expanding on Hocart’s thesis, Sahlins comments that it could be said that the gods and the spirits own the means of production, but within a cosmic polity, the spirits more accurately are the “means-cum-agents of production” (2017: 113). With examples from different ethnographic contexts from around the world, Sahlins proposes that metapersons “are the life-forces—which may be hypostatized as mana, hasina, wakan, semengat, orenda, nawalak, or the like—that make people’s gardens grow, their pigs flourish, and game animals become visible and available to them” (2017:113-114). To this list of “life-forces,” I would like to add animu from the Andean context and propose that Ausangate, as a powerful concentration of
*animu,* is an example of a metaperson who does not simply own the means of production but is the means of production within the cosmic polity that I aim to describe.

Describing a similar “life-force” to *animu* in Indonesia called *sumanga,* Tsintjilonis (1999) traces the paths that *sumanga* takes, and he shows how *sumanga* inscribes itself in the social landscape and manifests itself in a variety of phenomena such as “polities, navel posts, hearths, houses, and ‘golden platforms,’” all of which are “signs and marks of the energy that support and animate the Toraja universe” (1999: 640). In the Andean context as well, everything is an embodiment and container of *animu* though the amount of *animu* that each being contains varies. Ausangate is the being at the top and centre with the greatest concentration of *animu* and one of the ways in which *animu* flows from Ausangate is through a series of avatars that are organized in a hierarchical chain of command making up an impressive governmental bureaucracy. Lightning is one such avatar or agent of the mountain who distributes Ausangate’s power oftentimes to deadly and destructive effect.

On one occasion, I heard about an event in the past in which Ausangate used lightning to help the Inkans destroy the Spanish conquistadors. On a three-day trek around Ausangate with Lucio, we came to a lake called Yanacocha, which means “Black Lake,” and he told me about this event. “In the past” (as he would often begin), there was a battle at this lake between the Inkans and the Spanish. The battle was big and particularly fierce, and the Inkans were losing the fight, so they asked for the aid of Ausangate, petitioning him with coca leaves. Ausangate responded favourably and descended from the summit on a white horse and dressed in a white poncho wearing a sombrero cowboy hat. Ausangate struck the Spanish with lightning, killed them all, and buried them at the bottom of the lake. The Inkans then emerged victorious thanks to the aid of Ausangate. In more recent times, in 1996, Lake Yanacocha was chosen as the site for the first meeting of the rondas campesinas, a local judicial system among Quechua farmers, which organizes to punish “criminals” and to defend themselves against corrupt practices by state officials (de la Cadena 2015). From the Inkan victory over the Spanish to Quechua campesinos against thieves and state corruption, Yanacocha is a place associated with justice.

On a different occasion, I was told of another instance in which Ausangate used lightning to expel a foreign presence; in this case, not the Spanish colonial invaders but contemporary tourists. After a terrible lightning storm one day, I was informed that some tourists went up to the lakes at the foot of the mountain with a shaman from Cusco, but unfortunately, it was “fake shaman” who didn’t know what he was doing. Included in the despacho offering that the shaman gave to the mountain was some salt, but Ausangate hates
salt; Ausangate wants sweet things like sugar, wine, and rum. When salt was given to the mountain by the fake shaman, Ausangate became enraged and sent lightning to chase them away.

The use of lightning by Ausangate against tourists, fake shamans, and the Spanish might suggest that lightning is simply a weapon of Ausangate in the same way that a gun is the weapon of a soldier. However, in this animist cosmos, lightning is not an object but a subject, a person with intentions, a body, a home, and a name. To recall from the beginning of this chapter, lightning is a thief who steals potatoes, electricity, and the lives of humans and alpacas. Its body is made of iron, and it leaves flashes of light in its wake as it falls in a zig-zag pattern from the sky. When lightning strikes the ground, it leaves impressions of itself on the surface of the earth in fractal patterns, analogous to river and vein systems. It lives in Jaguar Lake and is sometimes called Mariano but now, is more recently called saqra. This thieving and stealing devil of a person is not a de-personalized instrument of Ausangate but rather, a servant and agent of Ausangate.

Lightning is a person, but within this hierarchically configured cosmos, lightning is not a fully separate and autonomous person; lightning may have distinct characteristics, but lightning is not an individual. Rather, lightning is a part of Ausangate’s “distributed personhood” (Gell 1998). It is one of the ways in which Ausangate carries out his will and manifests his power. Within this hierarchical bureaucracy, lightning cannot resist and rebel but can only carry out the intentions and will of the superior. When lightning steals animu from potatoes, alpacas, and humans, it is done so in order to feed the mountain who is hungry. In this relationship, lightning is perfectly obedient and submissive to the mountain because lightning is inextricably connected to the mountain. As an agent and servant of the mountain, lightning is one of the ways in which Ausangate instantiates his power and distributes his animu.

To recall from the Introduction, Dumont (1980) describes hierarchy in terms of the idea of encompassment in which the entity at the lower level of organization is encompassed by the superior. At the superior level, there is an identification and essential sameness. At the inferior level, there is a difference and distinction. For example, at the superior level, he argues, male and female are the same in that both are human. However, at the inferior level, there is a distinction and a difference: one is a male human and the other is a female human. Within this hierarchy, male and female are encompassed by the more general level of human.

In the case that I am presenting, at the general level, mountain and lightning are the same; they are both powerful concentrations of animu. However, as I will demonstrate, they
contain different amounts of *animu* because they have different bodies. In Tylor’s or Descola’s versions of animism, the mountain and lightning would be the same at the level of “soul” or “interiority,” but as I have shown, *animu* is not the equivalent of soul or interiority because *animu* is always linked to a particular body. The body is what differentiates the mountain and lightning and what gives them different amounts of *animu*. While lightning is composed of a single iron ball, the body of the mountain is constituted by many more substances, iron being just one of them. The body of the mountain also contains gold, silver, copper, and other metallic substances that mining corporations so desperately desire. The gathering and concentration of all of these metallic substances then gives the mountain more *animu* and makes the mountain a more powerful and encompassing entity in the social hierarchy. The body of the mountain contains the body of lightning; lightning is simply just one piece of the mountain. While the body differentiates lightning from the mountain, an unequal amount of the power that this *animu* entails differentiates them as well.

The cosmic polity that I am describing here may be seen in line with Árhem’s (2016) recent definition of hierarchical animism. Árhem writes, “in hierarchical animism beings are integrated by a principle of asymmetric intersubjectivity between ‘unequal souls’ and differentiated according to the formula ‘different degrees of spirit/potency, different body’ (2016: 25). In this ethnographic context, Ausangate and lightning are integrated in that both possess “unequal souls”: they both have *animu*, just different degrees of it. Furthermore, they are differentiated by the body, lightning’s body is made of iron but Ausangate’s body is made of many more substances such as gold and silver in addition to iron. This encompassing characteristic of Ausangate then is what gives Ausangate “more soul” or more power, and positions him at the top and centre of the hierarchy. Within this cosmic polity, Ausangate is a “plural singularity” (Fausto 2012) whose unitary being is instantiated in many parts, lightning being just one of the many agentive parts of the mountain. In the same way that Sahlins quipped, “Captain Cook is Lono, but Lono is not Captain Cook” (2017: 122), I could add, “Lightning isAusangate, but Ausangate is not Lightning.”

Given the unequal distribution of *animu* within this hierarchically arranged cosmic polity, in the next section I will show how a central preoccupation of daily life for many of my interlocutors concerns redistributing the *animu* from beings that possess more of it to beings that possess less, or as Hocart put it, “transferring life from objects abounding in it to objects dependent on it (1970[1936]: 3).
d. Asymmetric Reciprocity

During the course of my fieldwork, nearly every morning after breakfast, I joined Lucio and his seventy-eight-year-old mother named Vinita to chew coca leaves and to converse with Ausangate. Vinita usually held the bundle of leaves in a handwoven cloth which she would unwrap and place on the ground between the three of us and the mountain. Each person would grab the three best-looking leaves and hold them shiny side up between the thumb and index finger. Before chewing the leaves, we would invite Ausangate to join us by blowing on the leaves in the direction of the mountain. This ritual act of blowing on the leaves is called phukuy. As Allen describes, phukuy is a way of sending the sami (“fortifying essence”) of the coca leaf to the mountain for the mountain to consume (2002 [1988]: 104). This “fortifying essence” is what I mean by animu; it is the “life-force” of the coca leaf that we sent to Ausangate nearly every morning after breakfast.

But if Ausangate is such a powerful being who contains and controls all of the animu within his domain, why would he need human beings like us to send him the essence of the coca leaves? Could it be that Ausangate does not really need the leaves but what he does need are “signs of submission” (Leach 1976: 82-93) from his loyal subjects? To an extent, yes. Offering the coca leaves to the mountain is not a benign act of sociality but rather, a sacrificial practice that reinstates and reinforces the distance and separation between the more and less powerful persons in the social hierarchy. But, in another sense, Ausangate really does need the leaves in order to keep the animu circulating, in the same way that a state requires tax money from its citizens in order to keep the economy flowing. Within this cosmic polity, Ausangate controls the means of production and simultaneously is the means of production, so a central preoccupation of daily life is how to get Ausangate to keep the animu moving. The primary strategy is to attempt to establish a reciprocal albeit asymmetrical mode of relation with Ausangate in which both sides of the party benefit. For this reason, while blowing on the leaves and sending the essence of the coca to the mountain, specific requests for Ausangate’s favour were made which could be expressed verbally or in silence.

Herding and selling the wool of alpacas is the main source of income for the family with whom I was living, but the family does not own the alpacas; Ausangate, of course, is the owner. The mountain is responsible for the health, fertility, and multiplication of the flock, so requests were made each morning to Ausangate to help the alpacas flourish. When an alpaca was expected to give birth, for example, a successful delivery would be petitioned while blowing on the coca leaves. Likewise, Ausangate would be petitioned to restore the health of
alpacas that were sick in the stone corral hospital that had been built for them. Blowing on the coca leaves was a ritual act of giving the animu of the coca leaf to Ausangate with the hope that Ausangate, from his privileged position of power, would give more animu back, an animu which might take the form of an increase in the number of alpacas or more recently, the form of cash.

A recent source of income for many families in Pacchanta is the emerging tourist industry. Each morning, in addition to asking for the health of his alpacas, Lucio would specifically ask Ausangate to bring tourists to his property so that he and his family could make some money. Lucio and his two sons, when not too busy with the alpacas, at school, or working in the informal mines, would rent out their two horses and guide tourists to the lakes at the foot of Ausangate for a price: thirty soles for one horse and thirty soles for one guide. Thirty soles is the equivalent of about seven GBP. The trek to and from the lakes takes five to six hours. Every few months, much longer treks around Ausangate were made. These trips would take three to five days. Sebastiana, the mother of the family, also benefits economically from the tourist industry. She sells her handwoven alpaca wool textiles for prices that range as small as five soles for a small bracelet to five hundred soles for a poncho. Sebastiana would sometimes hike three hours uphill to a mountain pass 5,000 metres above sea level to sell her textiles to tourists. In doing this, she gained advantage over other women selling textiles by being the first vendor that the tourists encountered in their trek into Pacchanta.

Although people, like Lucio and Sebastiana, make their own efforts to flourish and prosper by doing things like assisting in the birth of newly born alpacas and hiking up to high mountain passes to sell textiles, Ausangate is ultimately in control of one’s fortune. Ritual actions, such as sharing coca leaves, are made to establish reciprocal relations with Ausangate in order to draw from the mountain’s power, but unfortunately, Ausangate, like other Apus in an asymmetric form of relation, is capricious. Knox and Harvey note, there is no guarantee that the rituals directed to the Apus will produce the desired effect; “humans can appeal but they do not control” (2011: 154). The relationship between humans and the Apus, like much of everyday life, is precarious and uncertain.

Inasmuch as the Apus are given substances such as coca in order to encourage a benevolent response, it is also the case that the Apus are given these substances in order to protect oneself from the harm that they might inflict. When mountains are not given substances such as coca leaves, sugar, and wine, they become hungry, angry, and violent, and Ausangate may send one of his agents like lightning to steal the animu of the potatoes, an alpaca, or a human in order to satisfy his hunger. In addition to lightning, Ausangate’s lion is another agent.
who is capable of inflicting this harm. While visiting Lucio’s uncle, Santiago, one day, he brought me to a rock on his property and said, “this is Ausangate’s lion,” and he told me how this rock lion is “malo,” the Spanish word for “bad,” because it is eating his alpacas, particularly the newly born ones. Santiago then told me how the lion lays there on his side, talking with Ausangate, and waiting to carry out the master’s commands. “It’s like his dog,” he said, “but a lion.” I was told that some rocks are bad like this one because they are hungry, and they are hungry because people are no longer giving them food offerings like they did in the past. So, they are lashing out in their hunger and eating newly born alpacas.

Knowing that I was a Catholic priest at the time, Santiago requested that I come to his property to offer a mass inside the alpaca corral. Like coca leaves and sugar, the Catholic mass is considered to be another sacrificial food offering that serves to satiate and placate the mountain. After celebrating the mass, we then proceeded to douse the rock lion with holy water mixed with salt. Substances such as sugar, coca leaves, and the body and blood of Christ are desirable substances that encourage a benevolent response because these substances give energy, life, and nourishment; in other words, they are sources of animu. So, when animu is given, animu is returned, at least that is the hope. Salt, on the other hand, as the conceptual and alimentary opposite of sugar, is not desirable; instead of inviting in, salt casts out. When the tourists gave salt to Ausangate, he responded in similar form by casting them out with lightning. Likewise, Vinita used holy water mixed with salt to expel lightning, and I used it to exorcise the rock lion. Salt is harmful and casts out while sugar is desirable and draws in.

Another highly valued substance in the Andes is fat. Coming from his work among the neighbouring Aymara in Bolivia, Andrew Orta (2004: 236) writes, “Fat is an index of well-being. It is said to be a source of strength—ch’ama—that enables people to ‘go about.’” Ch’ama, like animu and sumanga’, is another life-force that gives people the capacity to move and to breathe, and fat is a valuable substance because it is a container and concentration of this life-force. The presence of a vampire-like monster called the ñakaq who steals fat from human bodies further attests to the value of this substance. Like lightning and rock lions, the ñakaq is another agent of the Apus, an “oracle-servant (pongo) of an apu” as Gose (1986: 309) describes the creature, an agent who uses a variety of techniques to suck fat from human bodies and drain them of their animu. As a well-known figure in the Andean ethnographic literature, the ñakaq has a diversity of characteristics and goes by several names such as pishtaco and lik’ichiri (e.g. Burman 2018; Canessa 2012; Ødegaard 2015; Wachtel 1994; Weismantel 2001). Despite its diversity of features and forms, its core identity is held together by the defining characteristic of being a fat stealer. During the time of my fieldwork, I was told that there aren’t
any ñakaqs in Paccancha anymore but there are some in other places. Sebastiana told me that she used to be scared of tourists because she thought they were ñakaqs, but after she sold one of her textiles to a tourist one day, she stopped being scared of them.

Although I did not hear much more about ñakaqs during the time of my fieldwork, I quickly learned about the value of fat when I went to the alpaca corral to help shear wool during my first month in Paccancha and Lucio taught me how to flip an alpaca on its side. After blowing coca leaves to Ausangate, I wrapped my left arm around the alpaca’s neck and used my other arm to reach underneath the animal and pull its back leg up and toward me. This is meant to take the alpaca off balance so that the animal can then be flipped on its side using one’s chest and weight of the body. My effort, however, was desperately hopeless. I couldn’t take the animal off its feet, and the family roared in laughter. So, Sebastiana came over and flipped the alpaca on its side for me. Later that day, while eating lunch, Lucio gave me some chuño, which is a freeze-dried potato, and told me to eat more chuño. It will give me more animu, he said, so that I could flip the alpaca the next time. Although I secretly hated the taste of chuño, I would eat it because I was told that it would help me work harder in the chakras (potato fields), hike up hills faster, and flip over alpacas with ease.

Some things have greater concentrations of animu than others. Chuño contains more animu than pasta bought in the market. Fat has more animu than carrots. And mountains have more animu than lightning. Ausangate is the being who has the most animu of all because he contains and encompasses all of these substances within himself, including the substances in the mountain’s actual interior. On a hike up to the lakes one day with Lucio, I was looking at one of the glaciers coming down from Ausangate, and I expressed interest in what looked to be like a cave in the ice, and he told me that it is a door, and on the other side of the door, within the mountain, there is a jungle full of monkeys and a huge supply of gold. He then told me that efforts could be made to extract the gold from the mountain, but it would require a huge investment from the comuneros (‘community members’) of Paccancha to do it, but unfortunately, he said, they are not organized enough to do so. In the cosmic polity that I am describing, some things contain more animu than others, and a central and practical concern of daily life is how to get animu from beings who possess more of it and distribute it to beings who possess less. The last strategy aimed at the redistribution of animu that I will consider is the compadrazgo system⁴—an example in which the godparent is a container of animu in the

---

⁴ See Gudeman (1971) for a key study of compadrazgo.
same way that the mountain and other substances are. The ideal godparent is yet another fatty and sugary substance filled with gold.

When a child gets her or his haircut for the first time, a godparent is required. A godparent is also needed for baptism and marriage. Ideally, I was told, the godparent is someone from somewhere else, not from Pacchanta, someone from the outside. This may be someone like a local official from the nearby town of Ocongate, a teacher from Cusco, or a visiting gringo like me from the United States and the United Kingdom. The idea is to establish relations with someone who has more connections, more money, more power, more animu in order to draw benefit.

I was asked on numerous occasions to be a godfather. I managed to avoid accepting the requests every time except for one. I agreed to be the godfather for Sebastiana and Lucio’s twelve-year-old daughter, Vilma, on the day of her baptism, which coincided with the week that I left Pacchanta to return to my university in Scotland. Towards the end of the ceremony, Lucio asked me if I brought some sebo, the Spanish word for solidified fat. At the time, I didn’t know what he was talking about and responded “no.” He then said he would go to the store to buy some for me, so I gave him three soles to buy the fat for me. After a few minutes, Lucio returned and gave me a bag full of hard candy, each colourful piece individually wrapped. At the end of the ceremony, in which about a dozen school kids were baptized, everyone went outside in front of the church. The majority of people stood on the grass, and the godparents took their positions on the steps above everyone else. As a godfather, I followed their lead and stood on the steps as well. We then opened our bags of hard candy and began to throw the “fat” to the crowd, as people jumped and screamed in delight. It reminded me of Mardi Gras when I was a child growing up in the southern United States not too far from New Orleans. But this time, I was on the other side of the picture, not receiving the sweets and plastic trinkets thrown to me by the richer class wearing costumes and riding on floats, but one of the rich, standing on the church steps, throwing fat to the others located below.

In this story, the godparent is in the same structural position as the mountain. The sebo/fat/hard candy that the godparent throws at the end of the baptism ceremony is the same as money, alpacas, and gold sent from Ausangate. In the compadrazgo system, the godparent is drawn into a reciprocal yet asymmetric exchange relationship in the same way as relations are established with the mountain in order to receive benefit. However, in this hierarchical social arrangement, the more powerful person—the one with more animu—may refuse to throw candy and money but instead, send destructive lightning that cuts off the power and turns off the lights. I was told how some godparents in Cusco entice their godchildren to the promises
of work and money in the city only to end up exploiting their labour. In a vulnerable, precarious, and uncertain social landscape characterized by hierarchical arrangements, a range of tactics are employed to defend oneself against the harm such as casting out with salt, holy water, and smoke, and to draw in the *animu* through the sharing of coca leaves, sugar, and wine.

e. Conclusion

In this cosmic polity, everything is a container of *animu* yet the amount of *animu* that each being contains differs because each thing is composed of and constituted by a different type of body. The greater number of things that compose a particular body, the greater amount of *animu* and power that body has. At the top and centre of the social hierarchy, Ausangate contains the most amount of *animu* because he is the highest mountain who sees and can be seen over the greatest range of territory. Ausangate is a powerful metaperson who encompasses a multiplicity of parts. This multiplicity that Ausangate contains is precisely what gives him the most power over everything else. All else is an agent of Ausangate or a piece of Ausangate that is subordinate to its superior source. Given the unequal distribution of *animu* within this cosmic polity, a central preoccupation of daily life concerns the redistribution and transferral of this energy from beings who possess more of it to beings who possess less. While this redistribution at least helps keep the *animu* moving, it is built on a sacrificial logic that can end up reinforcing the hierarchical structure in which *animu* flows if no return from the more powerful other is made.
Chapter 2: Metapersons

a. Ausangate’s Body Parts (spatial dimensions)

On the last day of a relatively quick three-day loop hike around the base of Mount Ausangate, Lucio and I sat down on the edge of a rocky ridge to take a rest from the hours of monotonous, meditative walking, and he opened up another bag of coca leaves for us to chew. While chewing on the leaves, we began to survey the contours of the landscape in front of us, and Lucio said to me, “My parents and grandparents taught me that all of this land is a body. Right now, we are sitting on the neck. The swampy land below us is the stomach. And those streams . . . Can you see how the intestines wind their way down? The streams form a river which goes all the way down the leg of the valley to the feet in the town of Tinki, where the highway passes by.” Sitting with the snow-capped “north face” of Ausangate to our backs, I turned my head to look at the mountain’s face and saw it reflected in the mirror blue lake below us, and I asked, “So, is Ausangate the head?” Lucio turned his head around as well to look at the mountain’s face and said, much to my surprise, “No. Ausangate is the jefe” (“the chief,” “the boss”).

At that point, I had been living underneath Ausangate for six months, and I knew that he is considered to be a sentient mountain who is the most powerful person in the region, so I assumed that Ausangate must be the head, just as a CEO is “the head of a corporation,” or a Senior Lecturer is “head of the department.” But, my metaphor in this case didn’t work. As I came to learn, Ausangate is not simply the head because he is not just one part of the body that was being described before me. Ausangate is the foot, the stomach, and the neck that we were sitting on as well, all pieced together in a particular way to compose the body of the boss.

In this chapter, I develop the idea of metapersonhood which I introduced in Chapter One by examining in more detail the characteristics of Mount Ausangate as a metaperson, and I conclude by discussing Ausangate’s relationship to another metaperson widely known throughout Latin America as Pachamama (“Mother Earth”). I begin by considering how the pieces of Ausangate’s body are scattered out across space, and I show how the mountain Apu is materialized in a multiplicity of human and nonhuman forms which relate to each other in a hierarchical structure. I then propose that a basic tactic of everyday life for my interlocutors is concerned with the attempt to adopt the position and point of view of the Apu in order to
appropriate some of the mountain’s power. However, that appropriation is always partial and incomplete as is the source from which the power is drawn. Ausangate’s power is a finite good.

After considering the spatial and perspectival dimensions of Ausangate’s body, I turn to issues surrounding the temporal characteristics of the mountain. I discuss a narrative which relates that Ausangate was born during the colonial encounter between “King Inka” and “King Spain” and that he will die when he is no longer revered and the last chunks of ice melt from his glaciated body. I also show how changes in the mountain’s body are predictable through a particular type of weather forecasting system called *cabañuela*. I then compare Ausangate to Pachamama and show how she is an even more encompassing metaperson in the social hierarchy than Ausangate. Just as Ausangate is embodied in a multiplicity of forms, Ausangate is simply one piece of Pachamama, and I illustrate how she plays an active role in cosmopolitical projects throughout Latin America—in realms beyond Ausangate’s relatively provincial domain. To conclude, I compare and contrast the issues that I have discussed in this chapter to Amazonian perspectivism and the so-called posthuman turn in anthropology.

Like a human, Ausangate has body parts, but unlike a human, he has many more body parts than the standard human. For example, if Lucio and I were on the other side of the mountain, sitting on a different rocky ridge chewing coca leaves and looking down a different valley, we would be sitting on a different neck of Ausangate and looking down a different leg of the mountain. Based on the particular position of the human body on the body of Ausangate, different perspectives emerge which determine the particular part of the mountain’s body that is being seen. Depending on the place and perspective of the human body, Ausangate has many different legs, necks, and eyes. Given this plurality of disconnected body parts that are scattered out across space, Ausangate’s body is essentially an unbounded nonhuman body that spills out into the nooks and crannies of many different places.

Furthermore, Ausangate’s body is not limited to the geographical features of the landscape like streams, valleys, and ridges. As I showed in Chapter One, Ausangate’s body also includes meteorological elements such as lightning and hail. And, he can even manifest himself in human form such as when he came down from the summit riding a white horse and wearing a white cowboy hat to destroy the Spanish conquistadors. Other ethnographers of the Andean region have also noted the many different ways in which mountain *Apus* like Ausangate have manifested themselves in a variety of human and nonhuman beings; for example, the *Apus* have variously presented themselves as condors, hawks, pumas, state officials, sons-in-law, lawyers, and fat-stealer monsters known as *ñakaqs* (e.g. Allen 2002 [1988]; de la Cadena 2015; Gose 1986, 2018a, 2018b; Harris 2000; Nash 1979; Salazar-Soler
2002; Van Vleet 2008). Apus can be friends or enemies, kin or not-kin, human or nonhuman; the diversity is grand. According to Gose’s interlocutors, one Apu named Utupara sometimes appears “as a very old man with long white hair and a beard, doubled over and limping on one leg that has been crippled by mining” (1986: 303). Apus are the mountains, but they are also more than the mountains since they appear in a variety of human, animal, and meteorological forms. The bodies of Apus like Ausangate are unbounded bodies distributed across vast distances of space and instantiated in a multiplicity of forms.

The unbounded nature of Ausangate’s body raises the problem, however, regarding how far this unboundedness extends. Is Ausangate’s body unbounded to infinity, or is there a limit? Does Ausangate’s body extend out beyond the region of Cusco? Beyond Peru? South America? The Planet Earth? As I proposed in Chapter One, Ausangate’s body extends out only so far as the mountain’s gaze extends from the summit. If I can see Ausangate’s summit with my own eyes, then he can see me, so I am within his body, his domain, his territory. In this sense, Ausangate’s gaze is like the human gaze, but unlike the human gaze, Ausangate can see from many different places at the same time since his eyes are not simply located on the summit. Rather, as part of his “distributed personhood” (Gell 1998) and the fractal characteristics of his body, Ausangate’s eyes are spread out across the landscape and located in all of the places that fall within his range of vision from the summit. Even on cloudy days or behind hills which obstruct views of the summit, the Apu can still see you, and he can do so through the numerous agents that are under his command.

Based on her fieldwork in the relatively nearby village of Sonqo, Allen (2015) has written about this watchful nature of the Andean landscape, and she explains how it is structured in a hierarchical form. For example, she describes how the identity of a thief may be determined through the aid of Apus like Ausangate and his subordinate agents. If something is stolen from a house, then the eyes in the walls of the house would have seen the crime occur. But, in order to get the house to communicate what it had seen, a human diviner is employed who must go through a hierarchical chain of command to obtain the information from the house. The diviner first asks for the aid of a powerful Apu such as Ausangate. This Apu then calls upon the assistance of a smaller mountain located closer to the house who controls a smaller and less encompassing region. Then, that mountain calls upon the help of a smaller hill situated even closer to the house under investigation. And, finally, that hill calls on the house itself to release the information about the theft. That information from the house then goes back up through the hierarchical chain of command to the Apu who communicates it to the diviner.
The Apu’s eyes are located in all of the recesses of the landscape through the agents under his command, with the human diviner being just another one of those agents.

Anders Burman similarly comments on the watchful characteristics of the Andean landscape. He writes:

Friedrich Nietzsche (2005[1878]: 181) once wrote that the reason for why people like to be out in nature is that it has no opinion about us. Nature would be that liberated sphere in which we’re relieved of others’ gaze and judgments. Though a passionate hiker and a lover of the “air of heights” (2004 [1908]: 8), Nietzsche obviously never tread Andean soil. In the Andes, die freie Natur offers no place for “azure solitude” (ibid. 74). In an animate landscape of other-than-human subjectivities with agency, intentionality, power, and an avid will to communication, mountains, plains, rocks, lakes, and streams tend to one’s every move (2017: 926).

In the Andes, nature is not a place where someone can go in order to escape society and be alone because there is no strict separation between nature and society. The natural world is a part of the social world, and the social world is a part of the natural. As Lucio and I sat on the back of Ausangate’s neck chewing coca leaves and observing the various features of the landscape surrounding us, I gradually came to learn that we were not alone; we too were being watched.

From that spot where we were sitting on the back of Ausangate’s neck, Lucio and I could see another place far in the distance called Kunka Pata, which means “Back of the Neck.” The place is located on the top of a hill along the one road leading into and out of Pacchanta. From the neck that we were sitting on, it would have taken us approximately three hours to walk there, or maybe two, if we went really fast. Lucio’s house and the village of Pacchanta is located about halfway between Kunka Pata and the neck that we were on. At least once a week, I would hike up to Kunka Pata because this was the closest place to Pacchanta where I could get reception on my cell phone. Positioning my body on Kunka Pata, I occupied a space where I could call, send emails, and make connections to other people and places all over the world.

However, being in this place came at a risk, as high points like this are very dangerous places to be especially when lightning storms suddenly roll in. During the rainy season, when dark clouds began to form in the distance and move toward me, I would turn off my phone, as I was taught to do by my host family, and quickly make my way down. Kunka Pata is also a dangerous place to be, particularly at night, because many malos vientos (“bad winds”) blow in that area which are said to cause sickness if they enter the human body. I was taught to cover my head and ears with a hat and to never eat facing into the direction of the wind in order to protect myself from this harm. The risks, however, were worth it because here, I could
momentarily at least, overcome my feelings of disconnection during fieldwork by standing in a spot where I could make connections with friends and family in other places in Peru, the United States, and Scotland.

When I learned that the name of this place is Kunka Pata (“Back of the Neck”), I had initially assumed that it was the back of yet another neck of Ausangate. As I often stood there with my phone in hand to my ear, I was relatively close to the summit of Ausangate so first thought that I was obviously standing on the back of Ausangate’s neck. But, if I turned my body around and looked in the opposite direction, I could see, not Ausangate, but another powerful Apu in the far distance, on the other side of Cusco, named Salkantay. In this place where the two Apus can see each other and I can see both of them, I became unsure within whose body this space is enclosed. It appeared to me a contested space where the bodies and gazes of two Apus intersect and the division between one and the other is not so clear. Was I not on Ausangate’s neck, as I had assumed, but rather on Salkantay’s neck? Whose neck was I standing on?

The bodies of mountains flow into each other. The separation between one mountain body and another is blurred. The neck of one mountain may just as well be the neck of another because that one neck provides the supporting base for two different heads. As Gose observes, “defined more by their peaks than their bases, which necessarily continue into other landscapes, they [mountains] lack bounded physical unity” (2018a: 490). Based on his fieldwork in the Andes, Gose says that the mapping of mountain bodies is typically done in a “piecemeal” fashion: “a certain lake is the mountain’s heart, a certain mineshaft drills into the mountain’s testicles or disfigures its leg […] Seldom if ever do people delimit the land into fully bounded autonomous bodies. They seem more concerned with vital process than units” (2018a: 490).

While the domain of Ausangate may extend out only so far as his gaze allows, the end of his body and the beginning of another is not always clear especially in the places where the gazes of different Apus intersect. After quite some effort, I finally decided to give up trying to assign which body parts belong to which mountains because I gradually came to see that it did not matter so much for my interlocutors. Rather than describing the mountains as independent and sovereign entities (like a nation-state with closed borders), my interlocutors seemed much more interested in what Gose calls “vital process,” the flows of life between and within these bodies and units. This “vital process” is the animu that I described in Chapter One. In the next section, I would like to describe one particular place where I spent much time with my host family watching these vital processes flow through the landscape, a landscape which, of course, included us (humans). A human-landscape.
b. *El Mirador* ("The Viewpoint")

Located about halfway between the two necks that I have just been describing, *El Mirador* is a high spot on the family’s farm which provides a commanding view of Ausangate’s summit in one direction up the valley and the rest of the village of Pacchanta in the other direction down the valley. After eating breakfast, my day would typically begin by going to *El Mirador* with Lucio and his mother Vinita to sit, chew coca leaves, and petition Ausangate to bring some type of *suerte* ("luck") such as an increase in the alpaca herd or a visit from tourists with cash.

Looking down the valley from *El Mirador*, we could see the one dirt road leading into and out of Pacchanta until it disappeared at the end of our sight lines at *Kunka Pata*. From this spot, we could sit and observe the comings and goings of village life. Among other things, we would often see at around 9 a.m. a typically white Mercedes-Benz come over the crest of *Kunka Pata* which signalled that a van load of tourists was arriving from Cusco. Vinita taught me how coca leaves in the form of an S or with yellow streaks like gold sometimes predicted this event: *qolqe* ("silver/cash") was possibly coming our way. At this point, if Lucio’s oldest son José was around, and not away working in the informal mines, he would often grab one of the family’s two horses and begin to make his way down to the end of the road to meet the tourists when they arrived. If he got lucky, one of the tourists would rent his horse and pay José to be their guide for a day’s trek up to the lakes and back—the place where Lucio and I were sitting at the beginning of this chapter.

From *El Mirador*, we would watch the tourists, guides, and horses make their way up the valley on the trail adjacent to the farm, and when they got a little closer, Sebastiana would take off walking quickly with her bundle full of textiles wrapped around her back to intercept them as they passed by. I was often amazed at how quickly she could move over the terrain in her *ojota* sandals which were made out of the rubber from used car tires and are an index of indigeneity in the region (Canessa 2012; de la Cadena 2015). Lucio thought that I had pretty nice and expensive boots, but he always bragged that he, Sebastiana, and others could move much quicker and more gracefully over the earth in their *ojotas*. Sometimes, I would leave my perch on *El Mirador* and follow Sebastiana who indeed moved much quicker and more gracefully than me. When the tourists approached, she would sit down on the side of the trail, unfold her bundle of textiles, and beckon them with hand gestures to come and buy something from her. From the strategic position of *El Mirador*, with commanding views up and down the
valley, Sebastiana knew when to go to the trail with her textiles and José knew when to go to the end of the road with his horse to hopefully make some cash.

_El Mirador_ is a place where we spent much of our time, not only in the mornings to chew coca leaves, petition Ausangate, and watch for the arrival of tourists but at various times throughout the day to just take a look and see what was going on. There goes Sergio and María moving their alpacas higher up the valley. Here comes Sandro and Vilma on their way back from school; they must have gotten out early today. Looks like that rain in the distance is coming our way—better collect the laundry drying on the rocks. ¡Carajo! (Damn it!) The alpacas escaped their corral! Who is that stranger coming this way? _El Mirador_ was the place where Sebastiana did much of her weaving as well, occasionally looking up from her work to see what else was going on. I often enjoyed sitting there with her trying to learn some of her weaving techniques while attempting to overcome our language barrier.

_El Mirador_ was one of my favourite places to spend time; it was a kind of sacred centre of everyday life—a place to look out and to see the surrounding world. But, it is not only a place from which to look out but also a place where others are drawn in. When guests from the village would come to visit, and if it was not raining nor time to eat a meal, the visiting would take place in _El Mirador_. When tourists came, they too were always guided to this spot. Occasionally, some tourists would bring a hired “shaman” with them, and they would perform their ceremonies and ritual offerings to Ausangate in _El Mirador_, which was always a much more elaborate and choreographed affair than the everyday sharing of coca leaves with the mountain that Lucio and Vinita would conduct.

The site of _El Mirador_ is located just outside the family’s four adobe houses, and it is encircled by a wall of stones about waist high. Lining the inside of the stone wall is another series of large rocks that serve as seats for people to sit down. When seated around the inside of the stone wall, everyone’s gaze is directed inward, not outward to the rest of the world. In order to see out, you must stand up or sit on the opposite side of the wall. But interestingly, in _El Mirador_, what you see when looking inward is in many ways the same as that which you see when looking out; that is, what you see at the centre of _El Mirador_ is Ausangate by way of a miniature version of the mountain that Lucio has built with many different rocks that he has found scattered across the landscape. He was always looking for just the right shape and colour of rock to further perfect his model of the mountain, and I was eager to help him by keeping my eye out as well for just the right rock to bring home.

As I described in the Introduction, surrounding the miniature version of Ausangate is a collection of especially powerful rocks called _inqaychus_. They are shaped in the form of
alpacas and are considered to bring health and fertility to the alpaca herd, and hence, health and fertility to the family who is dependent on the alpacas as their primary source of income. Commenting on inqaychus based on her fieldwork in Pacchanta, Marisol de la Cadena observes that inqaychus are given to individuals by “earth-beings” such as Ausangate and that they are pieces of the earth-being’s self (2015: 107). In El Mirador, for example, Ausangate is present in that place through the inqaychus that are kept there. Allen explains this kind of logic using Gell’s notion of “distributed personhood.” She writes, “the apu distributes itself by means of the small, portable inqaychu which is easily incorporated into the heart of the household” (2016: 429). Keeping the inqaychus in El Mirador is a means by which some of the animating power of the mountain may be drawn in, tapped into, and directed to the alpaca herd for the ultimate benefit of the family.

El Mirador is a powerful place from which the surrounding world may be monitored and observed. I would like to suggest that human beings like Sebastiana, José, Vinita, and Lucio participate in the power of this place through the ways in which they attempt to take on the position and perspective of the mountain Apu. Standing in El Mirador or sitting on the outside of the stone wall and looking out, a human person has “super-vision” over the landscape and the flows of life through it, which places them a little higher up in the hierarchy of things and a little closer to a centre that is not on the margins. Ausangate is not only present in El Mirador through the inqaychus and the miniature version of the mountain but also through the human beings who occupy this space. So not only do Apus become human but humans may become Apus by taking on their position and point of view, similar to the godparent on the church steps that I described in Chapter One.

However, while humans may be able to take on the perspective of the Apu, I would like to emphasize that it is only partial and incomplete. The gaze from El Mirador is not as encompassing as the gaze from the summit of the mountain. Furthermore, that gaze from the summit has its limits too, its horizons. Ausangate is not authoritative beyond a certain scale, and even within his domain, Ausangate’s power sometimes wanes. For example, while talking to Lucio about his inqaychus one day, he told me that they are not as powerful as they used to be, and hence neither is the Apu. Lucio said that he used to have a really powerful inqaychu, but he said that he sold it to a tourist for one-hundred and fifty soles. He then reminisced how his parents used to give coca leaves and wine to the inqaychus every year on August 1st, but he said that most people don’t do this anymore, and since the inqaychus are not being fed, they are losing their power. Likewise, many people no longer give coca leaves and despacho (“food offerings”) to Ausangate, so the mountain is going hungry. One of the lakes that is considered
to be the mountain’s storehouse, where the Apu keeps his potatoes and alpaca meat, is also drying up and losing its supplies. Lucio then showed me a few other rocks, not in the shape of alpacas, but in the form of almost perfectly spherical balls. Placing them in my hands, he said enthusiastically, “Feel how heavy they are! These are really powerful rocks!” Interestingly, power here is related to weight—more condensed objects are more powerful. He then took them back from me and placed them on the stone table which hired shamans use as an “altar” to conduct ceremonies with tourists. These heavy rocks play an important part in those rituals, so I imagine that part of their power may be associated with the amount of money that tourism is bringing in.

For a time, the family was earning a descent amount of cash by watching the flows of tourists and tapping into their resources. Market prices for alpaca wool have declined significantly in this region, so Lucio and Sebastiana do not sell wool in the nearby small town of Tinki anymore; rather, they spin all of the wool themselves, and Sebastiana uses it to weave textiles which she sells to tourists. However, as in many other places, the tourism industry is quite precarious, which has been made all the more evident by the Covid-19 pandemic which hit just a few months after I left Pacchanta. There are no tourists in Pacchanta as I write this thesis; the flow has been blocked as borders have become sealed, and I often wonder how the family is doing. I am in contact with the eldest son from time to time on social media, but as there is no phone signal in Pacchanta, my contact is quite limited. During the time of my fieldwork, there was talk of putting a cell-phone-antennae on top of Kunka Pata (a place that connects disconnected places) but this talk has been going on for years and I am not sure when or if it will ever materialize. Although the flow of cash from tourists has stopped, I have comfort in knowing that the family at least has the alpacas and the land to rely on, but, of course, that’s quite precarious as well especially given what appears to be an increasingly unpredictable climate. Unlike the physical bodies of tourists, greenhouse gases from “first-world” nations continue to flow into Pacchanta causing the ice on Ausangate’s body to melt and to flow downstream, out of Pacchanta. In the next section, I would like to develop this theme of change and transformation in the social landscape by considering the temporal dimensions of Ausangate’s body.

c. Ausangate’s Body Parts (temporal dimensions)

As I have just suggested, Ausangate is neither eternal nor unchanging. His body parts age, decay, and melt away. He was born at a particular moment and will die at a particular
time. He has not always been nor forever will be. So, just as his body parts are distributed across space but eventually bound by the limits of his gaze, so too is the time span of his body limited. Yet the precise location and time in which this limit exists is a bit unclear since epochs, like bodies, tend to blur into one another.

According to an account given to two anthropologists in the early 1970s by Mariano Turpo (the agrarian reform leader mentioned in Chapter One), the birth and growth of Ausangate corresponded to a radical rupture in time between a previous epoch and the current one (Valderrama Fernández & Escalante Gutierrez 1996). The previous epoch was characterized by a time of darkness in which the inhabitants called ñawpaq machus lived and worked underneath the dim light of the moon. During this period of darkness, Inkariy (“King Inka”) created Mount Ausangate, and Ausangate began to grow in competition with other peaks. Ausangate kept growing higher and higher, and he outgrew the other peaks until Inkariy placed an enormous silver cross on the top of his head to prevent him from growing further. At this moment, the sun emerged, King Inka died, and Españariy (“King Spain”) rose to power. Under the light of this new regime, the eyes of the ñawpaq machus were burned, and they were forced into caves to escape the scorching rays and heat of the sun. The pre-Columbian bones that are occasionally found in caves today are regarded to be the remains of the inhabitants from this previous age (Sallnow 1987: 127). This cataclysmic event marked the transition from one cosmopolitical order to a new one and is known in the Quechua language as a pachakuti.

Pacha means “world,” but it may also be translated as “space-time” to emphasize both its spatial and temporal dimensions (Allen 2002 [1988]). A pachakuti refers to a reversal of space-time, marking a fundamental change in the existing order of things; a pachakuti is a “world-reversal.”

According to Quechua philosophy, kay pacha (“this world”), the current pacha in which we are living, will not last forever as another pachakuti is expected to occur and a new epoch and world will emerge. In the same narrative recounted by Mariano Turpo, this new world will begin when Ausangate is no longer respected by the Runakuna (a term which means both “human people” in general and “Quechua-speaking people” in particular). When Ausangate is no longer respected and no longer given food to eat, the snow will begin to melt and the mountain will become grey until eventually turning into a mountain of black cinder. On this day the final judgement will come and a new pacha will emerge (Valderrama Fernández & Escalante Gutierrez 1996).

5 I examine in detail the meaning of Runakuna in Chapter Five.
Far from a dreadful event, however, the melting of Ausangate’s glaciers and the change in time to a new world order is something to look forward to, according to Turpo’s account, because it will herald in a return to the time of the Inkas in which, he says, there was no division between Runakuna and Mistikuna (“Mestizos”). As translated by Michael Sallnow, Turpo remarked, “When the final judgment arrives, we will return to ancient times, and the bitter black heart of the misti will be sweetened; then, all of us will be with one clean heart, just as in the time of the Inkas” (1987: 212). A pachakuti then does not usher in a dramatically new world in a progressive and linear sense of time but rather marks a return to the old in a cyclical understanding of time. The way to move forward is to move backward.

Mariano Turpo’s account of a return to the time of the Inka when Ausangate’s snows melt is connected to a much wider millenarian narrative called Inkariy which circulates throughout much of Peru and is recounted in many different ways. According to one version, when the Spanish conquistadors killed the last Inkan King, his body was chopped up into pieces and was buried in different places throughout the empire. The Inka King’s head is currently located underneath the presidential palace in Lima, his arms are buried underneath a city plaza in Cusco, and his legs are in the town of Ayacucho. For the past several centuries, the pieces of the King’s body have been slowly growing underground until one day, they will re-emerge, reassemble, and the King will “take back his kingdom and restore harmony in the relationship between Pachamama (the earth) and her children” (Wikipedia, “Inkarii”).

In the late 1990s, stories about the return of Inkariy began to pick up around Pacchanta when the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. chose Pacchanta as a place to repatriate several “ancient bones” that were traced to the Cusco region (Krebs 2003, 2007). The Smithsonian was not able to identify a particular community to which the bones “belong,” so after consulting with several Cusqueño anthropologists, they decided to return the bones to Pacchanta given its proximity to Ausangate and the role that Ausangate plays in the “indigenous identity” of the region (ibid.). However, as de la Cadena observes, “while the repatriation of ancestral remains is a popular (if contentious) issue among Native North Americans (Kakaliouras 2012), in the Andes the idea of repatriation is foreign—or at least it was at the time the NMAI-sponsored event happened” (2015: 212). In general, pre-Columbian bones in the Andes are associated with the ŋawpaq machus that I just described and their remains tend to be avoided because they are often considered to be a source of sickness and

---

6 I am using Wikipedia as a source for this narrative because I think that it reflects how “myths,” “stories,” and “facts” are generated and shared today.

7 NMAI stands for National Museum of the American Indian which is a part of the Smithsonian.
even death. However, in talking about the repatriation event with de la Cadena, Nazario Turpo, the son of Mariano, told her that there is no need to worry about the bones because they had lost their power. Nevertheless, he organized with his father several despachos “food offerings” to Ausangate in order to prevent the possible negative effects of the bones just in case they still had some power (de la Cadena 2015).

When I read de la Cadena’s book before I left for fieldwork in Pacchanta, I must have missed the section that recounts this episode, so I was quite surprised one day when walking back to the house with Lucio from a village assembly, he pointed to a slightly upraised bump in the ground and said, “There’s an Inkan buried there.” “What? Really?” I said. “Yeah,” he responded, “Some anthropologists from Cusco came several years ago and put it there.” “Really? When?” “Sometime in the late ‘90s,” he said, “I think maybe 1996.” I was always impressed by his memory for dates. And then he said, “I was sick that day and couldn’t go to watch the burial, but my father went, and he said that it wasn’t really an Inkan that they buried. Just some doll. It was a fake Inkan.” Then Lucio pointed again to the “fake Inkan burial mound,” and he said, “you see how the mound is next to that rock.” “Yeah.” “That rock used to be much prettier and round. Now it is an ugly rock and all broken up.” And he continued, “I think that there was gold under that rock and that the people made a ‘pago a la tierra,’ (‘payment to the earth,’) in which a human baby was buried in exchange for the gold.” According to Lucio, the Smithsonian’s repatriation ceremony was really just a guise to steal gold away, but he ended by saying, “But, I’m not sure.”

From Lucio’s interpretation to others in the community who speculated that the bones could be connected to the return of Inkariy, the event certainly meant something different to them than it did to the Smithsonian. And, I’m left thinking, maybe Lucio is right, and they did steal some gold away, at least, in a metaphorical sense. It seems that the Smithsonian benefitted more from the repatriation act than the local community in Pacchanta. Now they are just left with a bump in the ground, an ugly rock, and “ancient bones” that possibly cause sickness and death. Or, who knows, maybe the bones have a life of their own and the Inka King’s body is indeed piecing itself back together again?

While I heard bits and pieces of the Inkariy narrative during the time of my fieldwork, I never heard it explicitly told in reference to the melting of Ausangate’s glaciers as recounted by Mariano Turpo in the early 1970s. The melting of Ausangate’s glaciers is not something that my interlocutors desire with a hope that it will signal a return to the time of the Inka. Rather, the melting of Ausangate’s glaciers is a cause for alarm and something to be avoided and prevented if possible. Apocalyptic narratives of climate change are often broadcast and
heard over the radio and there is much discussion concerned with finding possible solutions to this problem with much self-blame taking place in the process (cf. Burman 2017).

During the first tour that Lucio gave me of his farm, he was quite proud to show me something that he called his “experiment” which he designed in order to make the ice on Ausangate return. On the largest boulder adjacent to *El Mirador*, Lucio hooked up a hose that channels water from the river and delivers the water to the top of the boulder. He was quite enthusiastic in explaining to me how he managed to use the force of gravity to make the water flow upward. Seated at the summit of the boulder is a miniature stone replica of a condor. When water leaves from the rubber hose at the top, it appears as if the water is flowing from the condor’s talons as it moves down the surface of the rock. The key part here is that on freezing nights, Lucio keeps the water running, so that in the morning, the boulder is encrusted in ice. Like the replica in *El Mirador* and the *inqaychus* that are stored there, this boulder is another miniature version of Ausangate. Just as Lucio learned to pump water up to the top of this rock, he wants to channel water back up to the top of Ausangate so that more ice forms on its way back down. He told me that various politicians and lawmakers have come to his farm to see his experiment and to consider how it might be implemented on a larger scale.

Lucio’s plans to pump water back up to Ausangate to restore ice on the mountain are based on technical knowledge and experimentation with the forces of gravity and the flows of water, and he has used analogical reasoning to conclude that he might be able to carry out his tests at a much larger scale if he can access the right resources. Just as water flows up the boulder and encrusts it with ice on the way down so too might it be possible to pump water back up Ausangate and re-encrust the mountain with ice. I saw this use of analogy in many different ways throughout the course of fieldwork, and I would like to offer one more example of it in relation to time: how time is structured by a series of resemblances and correspondences between past, present, and future. Time, like space, is fractal. Just as Ausangate’s body replicates itself across space, that same body repeats itself through time.

d. A Weather Forecasting System

On August 20th, I walked outside my house at seven o’clock in the morning on my way to the outhouse (which was constructed by a local NGO), and I ran into Lucio who was standing outside the kitchen and looking up at the sky. He commented on the weather to me by noting how cloudy it was. I looked at the sky with still blurry eyes and mumbled in agreement. It was an unusual occurrence for the dry season in which the skies are normally clear and cold. After
my visit to the outhouse, we began to prepare breakfast and Lucio said to me, “Today is March.” Not having had my coffee yet, I wasn’t ready to try to figure out what he was talking about; he knows it’s August and the calendar on the wall provided by that same NGO reinforces it. But, as I got about halfway through my first cup of coffee, my curiosity got the better of me, so I finally asked, “Lucio, what do you mean, today is March?” I was now ready to assume the position of student which is a role that I tried to adopt throughout the course of fieldwork.

Assuming his role as teacher once again, Lucio then explained the counting system to me: August 1st marks the beginning of a new bi-annual cycle. On this day, elaborate despacho offerings are made to Ausangate and Pachamama so that the crops will grow and the number of alpacas will increase in the coming year. August 1st is August, but August 2nd is September because it is the first day after August 1st and September is the first month after August. The weather that happens on August 2nd is a sign of the weather that will occur in September. The counting system is a way of predicting an otherwise uncertain climatic future. And so, the logic continues: August 3rd is October. The clouds, the colour of the river, and the amount of snow and ice on the mountain on August 3rd are signs that reveal what the weather will be like in October. This system helps Lucio and others to know when to plant their seeds and how much time they have left in the dry season to make mud bricks for the construction of houses. The forecasts continue throughout the month:

August 4 is November  
August 5 is December  
August 6 is January  
August 7 is February  
August 8 is March  
August 9 is April  
August 10 is May  
August 11 is June  
August 12 is July  
August 13 is August (and here the cycle begins again for the next year)  
August 14 is September  
August 15 is October  
August 16 is November  
August 17 is December  
August 18 is January  
August 19 is February  
August 20 is March  
August 21 is April  
August 22 is May  
August 23 is June  
August 24 is July  
August 25 is August (and here the cycle ends until another two years)
This counting system only takes place in August, not in any other month. August is the height of the dry season and the weather will most likely begin to shift in September and the rains will hopefully come in full force in October.

As we finished preparing our one egg omelettes, I asked Lucio if other people count this way, and he said, “Yes, everyone does.” The clouds on August 20th that I saw with still blurry eyes on my way to the outhouse that morning were a sign that there will be lots of rain this coming March because after all, August 20th is March. Later that day, the rain came, and it was welcomed so that the potatoes will grow and the alpacas will have enough grass to eat. The weather that day in August was a propitious sign that in March, there will fortunately be lots of rain too, “as there should be.”

Despite Lucio’s claim that “everyone” predicts the weather in this way, I thought it might have been one of his idiosyncrasies until I learned that it is a common practice among the nearby Quechua-speaking Q’ero nation as well (Cometti 2020). In looking more into this topic, I then discovered that it is actually much more widespread and is found in many places throughout Latin America. The weather predicting system is called cabañuela, which is pronounced cabanilla in Quechua, and it was practiced in Spain before the Conquest and continues to be practiced by some expert cabañuelistas in Spain today. Apparently, cabanilla is part of a much longer colonial history than I originally expected when I first heard it described to me. In this regard, I would like to reiterate that the “cosmic polity” that I am illustrating is not a radically different world that is set apart from “the West” but one that is very much connected to other places such as Spain, the Smithsonian, and the various countries from which tourists originate as they flow over Kunka Pata in that white Mercedes-Benz. Cabanilla is not an “exotic” Quechua practice but rather a colonial import that has taken a distinct shape in a different place.

Even the so-called “worship” of mountains such as Ausangate in the present day is arguably a rather recent emergence and modern construct, not some “survival” (Tylor 1958 [1871]) from the Inkan and pre-Inkan past. Gose (2016) argues that before the Spanish arrived, mountains were not powerful people as they are often considered to be today. Rather, mountains were the places where the bones of the ancestors were interred whose power served in the political organization of different polities through kinship lines of descent. Political power was based on links to the power of the ancestors, a power which was located in the bones interred in the mountains. As Hocart put it, “the first kings must have been dead kings” (1954: 77). Only after these bones were destroyed by the Spanish in the Extirpation of Idolatry campaigns did the mountains themselves take the place of the bones and become powerful
authorities in and of themselves—landforms and beings too big for the colonizers to destroy. So-called “mountain worship,” Gose argues, is not as ancient as it is often claimed to be in the popular discourse of the area but is rather the result of the colonial encounter with the Spanish. As Mariano Turpo described, it appears that Ausangate’s birth and growth was indeed linked to that *pachakuti* otherwise known as the Spanish Conquest, and as the mountain’s glaciers recede, gradually transforming it into a “mountain of black cinder,” it appears that another *pachakuti* is on the horizon, at the end of our sight lines. Or maybe that new *pacha* (“world”) is already here, which some would like to officially call the Anthropocene? (Crutzen & Stoermer 2000). However, if time, like space, is fractal, are new epochs actually possible? Does time not simply repeat itself?

e. Pachamama

After considering some of the spatial and temporal dimensions of Ausangate’s body (which of course are overlapping dimensions), I would like to turn attention now to another metaperson who is actually a higher and even more encompassing being in the social hierarchy than Ausangate, that is, to the person of Pachamama, often translated as “Mother Earth,” but given the meaning of *pacha*, the word may more accurately be translated as “Space-Time Mother” or “World Mother.” Just as Ausangate is embodied in multiplicity of forms that are distributed across space and time, so too is Pachamama, with Ausangate being simply one small piece of her. When I asked Lucio, “Who is Pachamama?,” he enthusiastically said, “Todo. Todo” (“All. Everything”) while flailing his arms to encompass it all. As Allen similarly describes, place-based beings like Ausangate are simply “localized expressions of *Pachamama*” (2002 [1988]: 33).

So, if Pachamama is an even higher and more encompassing being in the social hierarchy than Ausangate, why have I not discussed her yet? Well, quite simply, because my interlocutors did not talk about her that much. Ausangate was a more significant figure in everyday life. As Allen (2016) and Ricard Lanata (2007) observe, Pachamama tends to be more important for agriculturalists than for alpaca-herding pastoralists. But, of course, the distinction between the agricultural and the pastoral is not so sharply divided since many agriculturalists have animals like sheep and many pastoralists also grow food like potatoes. The distinction is simply a matter of emphasis and degree. The family with whom I was living dedicated the majority of time, energy, and labour to herding alpacas, so I guess they could be classified as

---

8 I pick up the topic of the Anthropocene in Chapter Four.
pastoralists. But, they certainly grew potatoes; it is just that this was less time-consuming and labour intensive. Planting and harvesting potatoes is seasonal work that comes and goes; herding alpacas is an everyday affair. Since more time was spent with the alpacas, and Ausangate is the owner of the alpacas, more attention was given to him. But, Pachamama did come up from time to time, and when she did, there was always alcohol involved. While Ausangate likes to chew coca leaves and sweet things, Pachamama especially enjoys drinking beer (cf. Course 2013a).

Just as there is a ritual pattern for sharing coca leaves with Ausangate, as I described in the Introduction, there is a standard routine for sharing alcohol with Pachamama. The following vignette represents a typical drinking session. After helping to put a roof on José Luis’s newly constructed hostel for tourists, we all gathered in the room next to the mini-market to eat and to drink. While the men of the village had been working to put the roof on the house, the women had been cooking and preparing a meal for us all to eat at the end of the day. When I entered the room, I saw men sitting on benches around a table to the right, and women sitting on the ground to the left. Feeling uncomfortable with this division, I nevertheless sat with the men around the table.

After eating huge chunks of alpaca meat and potatoes, we started to drink. Constantino, who was on my left, passed me an open bottle of beer, about a litre. I said, in the customary, long and drawn-out way, “Graaaaa-cias” (“Thaaaaaa-nk you”), and waited for him to pass me the clear plastic cup that was going around the circle. After finishing the cup of beer that he had just poured for himself, he then handed the cup to me. I filled it with beer and passed the bottle to the next guy on my right who said to me, “Graaaaa-cias.” Now, with a full cup of beer in my hand, I poured a little bit on the ground for Pachamama to drink first. She is explicitly identified with the soil, the ground beneath our feet. Most floors in Pacchanta are made out of dirt, out of Pachamama. After giving her a sip, I then lifted the cup above my head and said to various people, looking at them directly in the eyes, “¡Salud! ¡Salud!” (“Health! Health!”). Saying this form of cheers to José Luis who happened to have bought this particular crate of beer was an especially important detail to keep in mind, at least, at the beginning of the night. Similarly with Pachamama—libations to her are most important at the beginning of the drinking session but tend to trickle off as the event goes on.

After giving a sip of beer to Pachamama and saying “¡Salud!” to a few others, I downed the cup in a few big gulps, and passed it to Enrique on my right. He repeated the same process as well, passed it to the next guy, and the bottle made its way around the circle. Sometimes two or three bottles would be going around at the same time so as to speed up the process and not
have to wait for so long until the bottle returned to you. When one bottle was emptied, it was placed back in the crate from which it came and another bottle was opened. If foam happened to spray from the bottle upon opening, it was a sign of good luck, meaning that *qolqe* (“silver”/“cash”) was coming your way. The foam of the beer is referred to as the fat of the beer. Fat, as I described in Chapter One, is a potent source of that vitalizing energy called *animu* and that’s why those monsters called *ñakaqs* like to consume it so much. On drinking occasions such as this, it often felt that a lot of *animu* was going around, which would sometimes erupt into fighting but more frequently into dancing.

As I sat around the table drinking with the men and with Pachamama, several women were engaged in the same process of ritual drinking seated on the ground on the other side of the room. As the night went along and people started to get a bit tipsy, the division between the men’s drinking group and the women’s drinking group gradually started to breakdown as several men and women started to dance with each other in the middle of the room. Around this time, I had about reached my limit, so I decided to return home quietly by sneaking out the door. I knew the party would go all night, or at least until all of the beer was gone. Indeed, when I went back in the morning, a few men were still working at finishing the beer.

This was a pretty standard drinking occasion that I saw repeated on many occasions. Drinking at marriage parties, however, is a bit different. Instead of an initial separation between male and female drinking groups that gradually breaks down, in a marriage celebration, we all started out from the beginning drinking and dancing together as one group. A crate of beer would be placed at the centre, and we would dance around the crate moving in a circle while passing the bottle of beer and cup forward. As this would go on for hours, it got to be quite dizzying at times but great fun. Most marriages take place in August, which is the height of the dry season before the rains begin to come in September, and it is the same month as the *cabanilla* counting system and the month in which *despacho* food offerings are made to Pachamama for a successful growing season. Even numbered days in August are the preferred dates to marry as odd numbered dates are said to bring bad luck to the couple. A couple is two, so the date of the wedding should be an even number as well.

Besides drinking sessions and the *despacho* offerings made to Pachamama in August, she does not figure as prominently in daily life as Ausangate. She is, however, widely known throughout Peru as well as in many other Latin American countries and has made her way onto a broader political stage. In 2001, for example, Nazario Turpo, the son of Mariano, was invited to Machu Picchu to perform a *despacho* for Pachamama and the *Apus* as part of the inauguration ceremonies for former President Toledo (de la Cadena 2015). The event was
televised and widely broadcast throughout the country. Despite what may have been perceived by many as a progressive effort to include indigenous people and practices into the politics of the state, much of the local media in Cusco scorned the event as an exploitation of indigenous identity to bolster the President’s campaign. It was also clearly an attempt to promote tourism to Cusco (de la Cadena 2015).

Furthermore, what actually happened that day, from Nazario’s perspective, was entirely lost in the coverage by the media. For him, the event was a complete failure because the other “shamans” from the Q’ero Nation that were chosen to perform the despacho did not complete the ritual appropriately. They didn’t even burn the despacho, so it was entirely ineffective. Reflecting on the event a few years later, Nazario suggested that this might be part of the reason why Toledo’s presidency was not going so well. Nazario’s despacho, however, was effective, and he performed it well, but he requested Pachamama and the Apus to cure the president’s leg since the president was limping that day; he did not request a successful government. Since his despacho was performed correctly, the president’s leg was healed, and he stopped limping (de la Cadena 2015: 183-184).

Pachamama has also entered into the national politics of Bolivia and Ecuador in many different ways. In 2008, she was inscribed into the Ecuadorian Constitution as a political subject endowed with rights and supposedly no longer a “natural object” to be exploited. However, as Casey High remarks, “if the inclusion of indigenous concepts in the constitution is, as Marisol de la Cadena suggests, an ‘insurgence of indigenous forces and practices’ (2010, 336) into state institutions, it is also a translation that equates Pachamama or sumac kawsay with nature and ‘alternative development’” (2020: 314). The Pachamama that is part of the Ecuadorian Constitution is not the Pachamama that we would drink beer with after working all day in Pacchanta. The Pachamama that is part of the Constitution is what “the West” calls nature, just dressed up in “indigenous garb” as a response to pressure from different social movements to include her in the Constitution. The Pachamama in Pacchanta, on the other hand, is a real person who helps your potatoes grow if you give her beer to drink. But, as I mentioned, since the potatoes don’t require quite as much attention as the alpacas, Pachamama is slightly less emphasized in comparison to Ausangate.

While Apu Ausangate is a more prominent figure of daily life in Pacchanta than Pachamama, he is not well-known, if known at all, beyond the Cusco region. Pachamama, on the other hand is; she has made her way onto a transnational political stage in ways that Ausangate has not. If Ausangate showed up at a rally in Ecuador, for example, to protest oil drilling in the Amazon, nobody would know who he was. Pachamama, on the other hand,
would be recognized at that rally. She would also be recognized at rallies throughout Latin America and beyond. I would like to suggest that one of the reasons for this difference is due to the geographical characteristics of the land itself and the way in which humans and nonhumans see things from the same perspective. As I described at the beginning of this chapter, the power of Ausangate derives from him being the tallest mountain in the Cusco region, and as the highest mountain, he has the most encompassing view of things. But ultimately, Ausangate’s sight lines reach a horizon; he can see no farther and humans can no longer see him. This is the limit of Ausangate’s domain. His power and authority does not extend to the other side of the horizon. Ausangate stops at that border.

Pachamama, on the other hand, crosses it. Composed of the earth, the dirt, the soil itself, Pachamama would be recognizable at that rally in Ecuador because the earth that exists in the Amazon is the same earth that exists in the Andes; they have just taken different shapes or forms. Mountain Apus do not exist in the Amazon because snow-capped mountains, of course, do not. Pachamama, however, the earth, does exist in both places. Rainforests and mountains are many; Pachamama is one. Well, at least in the places where she is recognized. I doubt that many people in Alaska know who Pachamama is. They might know Sedna, but she is a different metaperson altogether. So, it turns out that Pachamama has her limits too. She too is provincial, simply at a larger scale. In the end, the materiality of the earth is not the only thing that constitutes the body of Pachamama; human ideas about that materiality are equally significant. Ideology and materiality go hand in hand.

f. Conclusion

In some ways, what I have been attempting to illustrate in this rather ethnographic chapter is related to the perspectivism that Viveiros de Castro (1998) describes for the Amazonian region. The basic point of perspectivism is that human and nonhuman beings see things in the same way; that is, from the perspective of the human, but the things that they see are different because those things are being seen from the position of different bodies. For example, what I see as blood, a jaguar sees as beer, or what I see as maggots, a vulture sees as grilled fish (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 470). Instead of a variety of (cultural) perspectives on one (natural) world, there is rather a multiplicity of (natural) worlds that are seen from the same (human/cultural) perspective. The case is one of multinaturalism rather than multiculturalism.

In the Andes, the human point of view similarly reigns. All human and nonhuman beings see things in the same way; that is, from the perspective of the human, but the things
that they see are different because they are being seen from the position of different bodies. However, in the Andes, I would like to suggest that this difference between bodies is not as radically disconnected as in Amazonian perspectivism and that it is organized in a hierarchical form. While there is a difference in bodies, say between a mountain and a hill, these two entities are simultaneously connected to each in which the lower level hill is encompassed by the mountain at the higher and more general level. Hierarchy in this way suggests that the being at the top occupies a superior position which encompasses and incorporates all of the entities at the lower and more particular levels of being. At the top, there is an essential sameness, and difference only emerges at the lower level (Dumont 1980). But rather than simply thinking of hierarchy in the usual form of a triangle, I think that it is helpful to think of the top of that triangle as a centre as well that condenses and encompasses all that surrounds it.

But, what about humans? Where do humans fit in this socially encompassing hierarchy? Are human bodies connected to and encompassed by Ausangate and Pachamama in the same way that a hill or a house is encompassed? I would like to suggest that human bodies are pieces of the body of Ausangate and Pachamama as well, and while there are differences between these bodies, there is an underlying continuity at the most general level. In the same way that a hill is just one piece of Ausangate’s body, and Ausangate is just one piece of Pachamama’s, so too are humans pieces of the bodies of the metapersons who encompass them. For this reason, Ausangate can appear in human form, and humans can take on the position of the Apu in places such as El Mirador—they are ultimately part of the same body, just at different levels in the hierarchy. The same goes for other animals as well such as the hawks and condors who patrol the land from the skies and act as extensions of the Apu’s eyes (Gose 2018a). Alpacas, condors, humans, lightning, ingaychus, and more—all pieces of Ausangate’s and Pachamama’s body in what appears to be a hierarchically configured monistic cosmology. A universe in which difference is encompassed by sameness, and the outside is just the inside of something else at a larger scale. However, this is not exactly a monism in which everything is essentially the same within a closed totality. As I further develop in later chapters, there is always something “other” on the other side ad infinitum because otherness is a necessary requirement for the formation of selves in an ongoing dialectic of shifting power relations across time and space (Lévi-Strauss 1995; Viveiros de Castro 2001).

Finally, I would also like to situate all of this a bit within the so-called posthumanist turn in anthropology. While some of the ideas that I have been discussing may be related to posthumanism, I would like to emphasize that I do not think that there is very much that is posthuman about the issues I am discussing. Posthuman anthropology may be described as an
effort to radically de-centre the human by considering and taking into account the agency of nonhuman things—from microbes to robots to rocks (Weston 2017). Instead of understanding the human as set apart and transcendent to the rest of the nonhuman world, posthuman anthropology attempts to disrupt this nature/culture dichotomy by considering the human to be just one node in a much wider network of things—one piece of the many different assemblages. Furthermore, the emphasis in posthuman anthropology is placed on relationships over essences; that is, how things come into being through the relations that constitute them rather than being pre-fixed and given things already in and of themselves. Insofar as things in the cosmic polity that I am describing only exist and come into being through their relation to other things in the social hierarchy, my work is consistent with this emphasis in posthuman anthropology.

However, when it comes to the place of the human, the details that have emerged from my fieldwork are in many ways different from posthumanism because the human is still very much at the centre. In line with posthuman anthropology, I am trying to take seriously the agency of nonhuman actors such as mountains, hills, rocks, lakes, and houses, but the crucial point why this is not posthuman is that these nonhuman features have a human point of view. The cosmic polity that I am describing is incredibly anthropocentric. But rather than criticising my interlocutors for being anthropocentric, I think that the type of anthropocentrism that I am describing is very different from the type of anthropocentrism usually associated with that word.

Just because the human point of view is at the centre does not necessarily mean that the human is the sovereign master of the universe (Greco 2005). Instead, human beings immersed in a hierarchically configured animist cosmos tend to view themselves as contingent and partial elements of a cosmos that is much greater, bigger, and more powerful than them. It is a “humble anthropocentrism” (Canguilhem 1994, 2008; Course 2021). Although the human point of view reigns, humans do not; metapersons like Ausangate and Pachamama do. They are the real rulers and controllers of life and death. Humans might draw on and channel some of that power by associating themselves and socializing with these metapersons, but the power that is drawn is always partial and incomplete. The view from El Mirador is not as encompassing as the view from Ausangate’s summit. Humans have agency but there are greater forces surrounding us that control and constrain us. On this point, Sahlins writes:

If people really controlled their own lives, they would not die, or fall sick. Nor do they govern the weather and other external forces on which their welfare depends. The life-force that makes plants and animals grow or women bear children is not their doing. And if they reify it—as mana, semengat, or the
like—and attribute it to external authorities otherwise like themselves, this is not altogether a false consciousness, though it may be an unhappy one. Vitality and mortality do come from elsewhere, from forces beyond human society, even as they evidently take some interest in our existence. They must be, as Chewong say, “people like us” (2017: 117).

Metapersons like Ausangate and Pachamama are people like us, just much more powerful people, more powerful than the most powerful of our political leaders. In the next chapter, I would like to keep exploring some of the ways in which humans try to appropriate some of that power from different positions in the socio-cosmic hierarchy.
Chapter 3: The Lord of Shining Snow

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour

---William Blake

a. An Icon of El Señor

One Sunday morning in early April, during my weekly visit to the market in the small town of Tinki, I met a man from Pacchanta named Juvenal. He approached me and said that he had heard that I was a Catholic priest, and he wanted to know if I could come to his house to say a mass and to bless his farm with holy water. He told me that there were many malos vientos ("bad winds") around his house that were causing his children and his alpacas to get sick, and he thought that a mass and a blessing with holy water could help. At that point, I had already visited a few other homes in response to similar requests, so I was not surprised when Juvenal approached me and asked if I could do this. Even though I was reluctant to say yes because I did not intend to work as a priest in Pacchanta (as I explain the Introduction), I agreed to go to his house since the request was initiated by him. We proceeded to set a time and date, and he explained where his house is located. At the end of the conversation, we then shook hands as if we had just completed a successful business arrangement.

The following Wednesday, at eight o’clock in the morning, after eating my usual alpaca and potato soup breakfast, I set off walking for Juvenal’s house. I knew that it would take about two hours to get there from where I was staying. Juvenal lives in what was described to me by Lucio as “the most Catholic part of Pacchanta.” He told me that there are six families who live in this area, all of whom are Catholic. The other barrios (“neighbourhoods”) of Pacchanta, he said, are “mixed” between Catholics and Maranatas which, as mentioned previously, is an evangelical form of Christianity that has been a growing presence in the region since the early 1990s. Lucio said that families frequently switch back and forth between these two religious identities for a range of different reasons, but the area in which Juvenal lives “has always been Catholic.” “Well,” he then said, “except for one family; they recently converted.”

As I approached the Catholic barrio, some dogs from Juvenal’s house started barking and running quickly toward me. Since my scent and appearance was unfamiliar to them, this was not a friendly greeting. Rather, they were set out to attack, to protect their turf, and to
announce the arrival of a stranger. Fortunately, I had another dog at my side, named Pappy, who would always protect me on occasions like this. Pappy belonged to the family with whom I was living, and ever since the first day that I gave him something to eat using the excess amount of food that I was regularly served, he always followed me wherever I went. Although I may like to believe that there was something about me that attracted Pappy to me, I realize that it was just the food. As I came to discover, dogs belong to whomever feeds them regularly. And, in the absence of someone to feed them, they wander around in search of a patron/owner. Similar to the relationships described by many ethnographers throughout the Andes and the Amazon, ownership is established through feeding practices; an owner is person who gives you food (Costa 2017; Fausto 2012; Gose 1994; Mayer 2002; Walker 2013).

Since I gave food to Pappy on a regular basis, I became one of his owners, and in order to keep receiving food from me, Pappy seemed to think that he had to give something to me in return. The relationship between dogs and humans, I would like to propose, is analogous to the reciprocal yet asymmetric relation between humans and mountain Apus. A human is to a dog what an Apu is to a human: a Lord, a Master, an Owner. However, as with all analogies, although there is a structural similarity, there are differences in terms of content. For example, unless they are eaten, which is not common, dogs do not give food to humans in the same way as humans give food to the Apus, but dogs do provide other things to their owners in return such as protection and safety. Dogs protect homes against encroaching strangers like me as I approached Juvenal’s house, and they similarly keep watch during the night over the potatoes and the alpacas to keep them safe from human and nonhuman thieves. Black dogs, like Pappy, also protect humans against witchcraft as their colour is said to absorb the malos vientos flowing through the air. When Juvenal’s dogs started barking and running toward me to protect the home of their master, Pappy, my protector, started barking and running toward them ready for a fight. Canine bodies with growling teeth soon collided.

Unfortunately, however, there were too many dogs for Pappy to fight off alone, and they started to get closer to me. When I got a bit scared of actually being bitten, I threw them some pieces of alpaca bones that I always kept in my pockets precisely for situations like this. Fortunately, as I expected, they went for the alpaca bones and not for me; the alpaca bones were my substitute. Moreover, by that point, Juvenal had come out of his house and was working to call the dogs off. With the help of Pappy, the bones, and Juvenal’s voice, the dogs finally settled down, so I walked closer to the house and shook Juvenal’s hand once again.

After a bit of small talk, Juvenal began setting up a small table in front of his house that we could use as an altar for the mass, but before he could get all of the legs of the table unfolded,
his wife called him to come inside the house. After a few moments inside, Juvenal came back out of the house and suggested that we rather set up the altar behind the house. He said that there is a rock on the back side of the house that is causing his children and the alpacas to get sick, and it would be better if we could perform the ceremony closer to that rock. I said, “of course,” so we went behind the house to set up the altar. Although Juvenal did not say so explicitly, I had been told on other occasions, such as the one described in Chapter One, that some rocks are bad and are causing illness because they are hungry, and in order to keep them from causing harm, they must be given substances such as coca leaves, alcohol, and despachos. As I came to learn through the various requests for my services as a Jesuit priest, the body and blood of Christ would do the trick as well. Rocks, like dogs and humans, must be fed and cared for. If not, harm results.

A dog starvd [sic] at his Masters [sic] Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State

These two verses come from that same poem by Blake that I used in the epigraph. I guess the poem could just as well read:

A rock starvd at his Masters Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State

At the end of this chapter, I will return to this poem with a brief yet critical assessment of its analogical and fractal characteristics, but I have a lot of work to do first in order to get to there.

Once Juvenal and I had positioned the table next to the hungry rock, I began to take out the ritual paraphernalia that I had brought for the ceremony, some of which I had purchased from Sebastiana and Lucio. I first unfolded and placed on top of the table one of Sebastiana’s colourful hand-woven textiles made out of alpaca wool. I then took out of my backpack a wooden cup and a plate that I had bought from Lucio, and I placed them on the table. Lucio told me that the cup is a q’ero, and it is the kind of cup that the Inkans would drink out of. He said it is a really old cup, but he doubts that it dates back to the time of the Inka. I was sceptical as well since it appears to have been made in a factory. I proceeded to fill the cup up with some wine, and I placed a little water to the side to add later. I then placed some small communion wafers onto the plate and a larger host on top of those. Lucio would sometimes ask if I could give him some of the wafers (with or without being “consecrated” in the mass) because he said that they are good medicine, so I would occasionally give him some to use as he wished. After setting the cup of wine and the plate of bread on the table, I put down a couple of books that contained all of the prayers and the readings that were necessary for the ceremony, all translated
into Quechua. With this, my part in the work of transforming the table into an altar was complete.

Meanwhile, Juvenal and several members of his family were busy with their own part. First, a bucket of water was set in front of the table followed by several plastic two-litre bottles of water with the caps off. This was water that they wanted to be converted into holy water through its proximity to the altar and the prayer that I would say over it at the end of the ceremony. When they set the water down, I was instructed to add some salt to it, and just when I thought that I had poured a sufficient amount, I paused for a moment until I was told, “más, más” (“more, more”). They also brought some soil which would later be used in the chakras as medicine or fertilizer to help the potatoes grow. A few candles were set on top and in front of the table as well. And, finally, cradled in his arms, Juvenal brought out of his home an icon which was housed in a rectangular wooden frame, and he placed it carefully in front of the table. With this, the preparation was complete and the table had now become an altar.

Curious about the icon, I asked, “What is that?” Juvenal said that it is a demanda and that it is brought to the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine every year. When he mentioned the name Quyllurit’i, he turned around and pointed to the glaciated mountain chain where Quyllurit’i is located. Since it was a clear and sunny day, we could see the ice-capped mountains in the distance with a bright, shining light reflecting off them. Juvenal said that he plans to go there next month with others from Pacchanta for the feast of the Ascension, and he asked if I would like to come along. “Yeah,” I said. “I actually already have plans to be there as I am committed to saying mass for the occasion, but I have no one to walk there with, so I would be happy to go with you all.”

The place to which we were referring is located at 4,800 metres above sea level just below a number of glaciers that descend from the mountain peaks in several separate tongues. At this site a church has been constructed around a large rock that has the image of the crucified Christ painted onto it. This rock and this place is El Señor de Quyllurit’i (“The Lord of Shining Snow”) who, as I will illustrate in this chapter, is one of the most powerful metapersons in the Cusco region and is inextricably connected to Ausangate and Pachamama. Every year, tens of thousands of pilgrims travel to Quyllurit’i to ask for his aid with whatever concerns that they may be carrying in their everyday lives, and in exchange for the sacrifices that they make to travel to his sanctuary to visit him, they hope that their petitions will be heard and responded to generously. Similar to the animu that I have been describing, what pilgrims seek from Quyllurit’i is his “grace” (Pitt-Rivers 2011) through a reciprocal yet asymmetric form of relation. Like Ausangate, Quyllurit’i is simultaneously a person and place who/that is a
powerful concentration of *animu* and another localized expression of the more hierarchically encompassing Pachamama.

In this chapter, I would like to continue developing the idea of metapersonhood by considering the fractal characteristics of Quyllurit’i’s body. The bodies of metapersons follow a fractal geometrical pattern in which the same form replicates itself at different scales across space and time. A metaperson is a “fractal person” which Roy Wagner describes as “an entity whose (external) relationships with others are integral (internal) to it. However diminished or magnified, the fractal person, keeping its scale, reproduces only versions of itself” (1991: 159).

Just as Ausangate is a piece of Pachamama, as I described in the last chapter, El Señor de Quyllurit’i is a piece of Ausangate, and the icons called *demandas* that flow to and from his shrine are fractal extensions of himself. Like the alpaca-shaped stone *inqaychus* that I also discussed in the last chapter and in the Introduction, the *demanda* that Juvenal placed carefully in front of the altar is a piece of Quyllurit’i which is simultaneously all of Quyllurit’i. The icon is not a representation of Quyllurit’i; it is an instantiation of The Lord who is both Christ and Quyllurit’i (Salas Carreño 2020).

If all of this sounds a bit like a Catholic theology of the Eucharist in which a communion wafer is a piece of Christ which is simultaneously all of Christ, or a relic is not just a piece of a saint but is all of the saint, then I will have made my point. The cosmology that I am describing in this thesis is deeply Catholic and Andean at the same time (cf. Orta 2004). Difference, in a system that is characterized by fractal relations, is always encompassed by sameness at greater and greater scales. Similar to Strathern’s (1988) idea of the dividual person who is always in the process of becoming, fractal persons continue to expand through the ongoing incorporation of alterities.

In order to develop these ideas, I would like to put on pause that mass at Juvenal’s house and take a trip to the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine to describe the layout of the place and the way in which the *demandas* flow to and from the sanctuary. While there, I will also focus on another movement that involves the transfer of crosses back and forth between the shrine and the glaciers that hang above it. This transfer of crosses is performed by a type of ritual dancer called an *ukuku* whom I will introduce in this chapter and discuss further in the following chapters. After a visit to the shrine and to the glacial home of the *Apu* who lives above the shrine, I will return to the mass at Juvenal’s house at the end. By then, I hope that the fractal characteristics of the cosmology that I am describing will be as clear as that sunny day in April at Juvenal’s house with The Lord of Shining Snow glistening in the distance and simultaneously sitting right next to us at the altar.
b. Gathering the Icons

A recently constructed paved road called the Interoceanic Highway, which passes eight and a half kilometres downhill from the shrine, has contributed to an enormous growth in the number of people who are able to travel to Quyllurit’i. As discussed in the Introduction, the highway gets its name “Interoceanic” as it is claimed to “link” two oceans: the Pacific on the Peruvian coast all the way across the continent to the Atlantic on the Brazilian coast (Harvey & Knox 2015). The section of the highway that passes close to the shrine was one of the last segments of the road to complete given its geographic “remoteness” and the extreme mountain terrain over which it travels. The highest mountain pass along the entire highway, at 5,200 metres, is located relatively close to the starting off point from the road to the shrine. From this high pass, heading east away from the shrine, the road begins its long and winding descent into the Amazon. Looking at the photo that I just shared, rainforest is “just on the other side” of those snow-capped mountains in the distance. If the Andes has an edge, then this is certainly one of them. Relying on material from Randall (1982) about the pilgrimage shrine, Taussig reflects on how these images of “brilliant white massifs rising straight out of the jungle, floating over the clouded rain forest” are “marvellous metaphors” for understanding racialised power...
dynamics between the Andes and the Amazon (1987: 228-241). The ways in which the animu of an Indigenous Other that is associated with the Amazon is incorporated into an Andean Self through mimetic performances during the pilgrimage festival is a topic that I develop in Chapter Six.

While the construction of the highway has contributed toward the inclusion of more pilgrims coming from farther away and from bigger urban centres, it has simultaneously and paradoxically contributed to the exclusion of those who live closest to the shrine like the people who live in Pacchanta. Since at least the 1930s, local groups of dancer-pilgrims called comparsas would bring their community’s demanda to the shrine just before the feast of Corpus Christi. However, as the pilgrimage has grown, the comparsas from the local region of Ocongate no longer bring their demandas during the main Corpus Christi event. Instead, they bring their demandas to the shrine one month earlier on the feast of the Ascension. They do this in order to avoid the congestion at the shrine and to give themselves the opportunity to make some money off of the bigger event. Renting horses to the pilgrims and selling them food are a couple of ways to make a bit of money. So, it is not so much that the local people have been excluded from the main event as much as they have been incorporated into it in new and different ways.

During the time of my fieldwork, roughly 90,000 pilgrims converged at Quyllurit’i just before the feast of Corpus Christi. With such a large number of people gathered in one space, access into the church to see El Señor was a bit difficult to attain. When the comparsas arrived at the shrine with their demandas, they immediately joined a queue that was flowing slowly through the front door of the church. When they entered the shrine, they were given four minutes to perform a dance in front of the Lord and to sing Him a song. The four minutes that they had to dance and to sing was given to them and tightly controlled by an organization called La Hermandad (“The Brotherhood”) which is in charge of administering the shrine.

The image of Christ on the boulder that the comparsas danced in front of is located immediately behind the altar and above the tabernacle. It is protected by a pane of glass, and it is the only part of the rock that is visible from within the church. The rest of the rock is concealed by a large golden altarpiece. On the other side of this altarpiece, the remainder of the rock is situated in the sacristy, and a final fragment of the rock flows out behind the church’s back wall. Although the image on the rock inside the church receives by far the most amount of attention, a few pilgrims may be found outside the church giving attention to the rock as well.
Inside the Church

The dances that were performed inside the church varied and were obviously practiced many times before the event. One person told me that the better the dance, the more pleased the Lord will be, which makes you more receptive to his grace. In addition to keeping the time so as to allow the flow of pilgrims to keep moving, the time-keeper from the Brotherhood...
would praise some dances for their beauty and not praise others which were found not so beautiful. The dances that were judged to be more beautiful were sometimes allowed to go a little over the four-minute limit. In many ways, the time-keeping judge was the voice of the Lord; he kept the pilgrims flowing, and he determined what was considered pleasing, good, and beautiful.

When the four minutes or so were up, the comparsas handed over their demanda to a member of the Brotherhood who then placed it alongside the many others adjacent to the image of Quyllurit‘i on the boulder. After handing over their icon, where it sat for three days until the end of the festival, the comparsas moved out of the church’s left-side door. Meanwhile, on the other side of the church and behind the altarpiece, pilgrims who had come to the shrine not attached to any particular comparsa were steadily flowing in through the church’s right-side door to get a side-angle glimpse of the Lord. Many pilgrims exit the shrine walking backwards so as to keep their eyes fixed on the Lord. I was told that it is “disrespectful” to turn one’s back on Him.

The image of Christ on the rock is commonly said to have miraculously appeared in 1780 after an encounter between a young herder named Mariano and a “mestizo child” named Manuel. Reproduced in countless devotional booklets, documentaries, homilies, blogs, academic articles, and Wikipedia annotations, the story about the appearance of the image on the rock follows a fairly standard narrative; however, even the “official account” often varies in many significant details. These differences in details are the result of the interests of the storyteller and the audience to whom the narrative is being recounted as well as the particular type of medium that is used to transmit the story. Depending on the medium and what is intended to be communicated through it, some details are included; others are excluded; some are highlighted; others, not highlighted; and some, are completely transformed. Nevertheless, despite all of the variations on the story, there is a fairly standard form which is largely based on an account that was written down by a Catholic priest who served as pastor in the town of Ccatca between 1928 and 1946 (Sallnow 1987: 207). The following is Quyllurit‘i’s origin story, which is heavily influenced by Sallnow’s (1987) reproduction of the story and by a booklet that I purchased at the shrine for one sol:

_Around the year 1780 there lived an alpaca herder near the town of Mahuayani who had two sons. His sons would help their father by tending to the alpacas on the mountain slopes up the Sinakara valley. The older brother, however, would often mistreat his younger brother named Mariano. Despairing of his life after being abused by his older brother, Mariano ran_
away farther up the valley toward the edge of the glaciers that descend from the high mountains. Near the edge of the glacier, Mariano met a mestizo boy named Manuel who cheered him up by giving him some bread to eat. For many days, Mariano would return to the same spot to eat and to play with his new friend Manuel.

One day, a friend of Mariano’s father spotted Mariano playing with the mestizo child and reported the affair to Mariano’s father. Suspecting that Mariano might be neglecting the herd of alpacas and curious why he was not returning home to eat, Mariano’s father went up the valley to investigate. When he arrived near the edge of the glaciers, he discovered that the herd of alpacas had miraculously multiplied! Mariano’s father then instructed his son to ask Manuel the next time that he sees him where he is from. When Mariano saw his new friend again, Manuel said that he is from Tayankani. Continuing to follow his father’s instructions, Mariano proceeded to take a piece of cloth from the boy, and he travelled to Cusco with it so that they could make Manuel a new set of clothes. The tailors in Cusco, however, were unable to make the new set of clothes because they said that it is very fine liturgical cloth that only the archbishop wears, so Mariano then went to the bishop to request more of the same material. Upon seeing the cloth, the bishop suspected sacrilegious activity, and he ordered the priest in Ocongate to go up the Sinakara valley to investigate the matter.

As the priest and a small party of other church delegates approached the edge of the glaciers, they saw the mestizo child from a distance, and they were temporarily blinded by a radiating light coming from his body. When the party approached closer, the priest attempted to seize Manuel, but he caught hold of a tayanka tree instead. Thinking that the boy had climbed up the tree, the priest looked up and saw Christ’s agonizing body hanging from the tree. Shocked by the sight, the party fell to their knees, and when they recovered their wits, they found the tayanka tree in the shape of a cross and the dead body of Mariano who had died from susto (“fright”). They proceeded to bury Mariano under a boulder next to the tree. When the King of Spain, Carlos III, heard about the event, he ordered that the cross-shaped tayanka tree be sent to him. Despite protests from the Runakuna (“Quechua-speaking people”) in Peru, the King of Spain would not return the cross, so the parish priest, wanting to quell a possible rebellion, commissioned a replica be made in its place. That replica now sits in a side chapel in Ocongate.

The rock in the church with the image of Christ on it is regarded by many people to be the rock where Mariano is now buried, which makes the entire festival a pilgrimage to a tomb. But of course, not all pilgrims who go to the shrine know this story. And if they do, they may tell it in many different ways. For example, Sallnow relates how some accounts do not mention
the *tayanka* tree at all; instead, they emphasize that Manuel escaped his persecutors by discarding his clothes and entering into the rock that now sits in the church (1987: 210). In this version, Christ does not die on a tree but transforms into a rock. This version makes the story more consistent with many other narratives throughout the Andes of humans becoming rocks (Dean 2014). Indeed, the phenomenon of humans transforming into rocks is quite common in many other places around the world as well (Hocart 2004 [1952]). There is even one such rock on the farm where I was living. Lucio showed it to me one day and told me that it is one of his ancestors. He said that “in the past” his ancestor was travelling from a place really far away, and when his ancestor sat down in this spot, the person transformed into a rock. Pointing to the rock, Lucio said, “Can you see the bag on his back? This is the bag that the person was carrying which held all of his food.” Whether transformed into a rock or buried in a tomb, places are often made around the sites where ancestors now rest (Harrison 2003). Rocks and tombs are fixtures in the social landscape—reference points around which relations are produced—similar to the *w’akas* along the *ceque* lines that I discussed in the Introduction (Abercrombie 1998; Bauer 1992, 1998; Rowe 1946; Salomon 2004; Zuidema 1990).

Also, as discussed in the Introduction, Sallnow (1974, 1987) describes the movement of the *demandas* to the rock-tomb as a process by which the *demandas* are recharged by their superior source. In this sense, the rock at the shrine is like a gigantic battery charger, and by placing the *demanda* next to it, the *demanda* is able to appropriate some of the rock’s energy. The *demandas* then return to the communities from which they originated with their energy restored which brings blessing, prosperity, and good luck for the year ahead. At the culmination of the year, they will need to be returned to the pilgrimage shrine once again in order to be recharged and re-receive the blessing of The Lord.

Salas Carreño (2020) describes the *demanda* in a similar way. However, rather than only highlighting the power, energy, and agency that is absorbed through the exchange, he emphasizes the materiality of the relationship between the rock and the *demanda*. He writes:

> The etiquette for treating the *demanda* is the same used for interacting with the Lord Quyllurit’i himself. The pilgrimage is a process through which Lord Quyllurit’i is incorporated in the *demanda*, and thus, distributing not only his agency, in Alfred Gell’s (1998) terms, but himself. The *demanda* becomes another body of Lord Quyllurit’i rather than just being a mere representation (2020:16-17).

The *demanda*, in other words, is a part of Quyllurit’i’s fractal body—a part that is simultaneously a whole. When Juvenal brought the *demanda* out of his house and set it down in front of the altar next to the hungry rock, he did it carefully and gently because he was
handling Quyllurit’i himself—not a representation of him. But, before returning to that mass, there is one more thing that I would like to do.

While the demanda is a piece of Quyllurit’i’s body, in the next section, I would like to flip things around by showing how Quyllurit’i is a piece of the bodies of the metapersons who encompass and compose him. A fractal metaperson is neither singular nor plural; a fractal metaperson is a “plural singularity” as I described in the Introduction and in Chapter One (Fausto 2012). One of the ways, Wagner says, of making distinctions within this plurality of relations is through the practice of naming: “any recognition or bestowal of a name is always the fixing of a point of reference within a potentially infinite range of relations, a designation that is inherently relational” (1991: 164). In the next section, I will show how El Señor de Quyllurit’i (“The Lord of Shining Snow”) is inherently related to Apu Qolqepunku (“Lord Silvergate”) who is furthermore related to Ausangate and Pachamama in a fractal pattern of relations. Names give distinctions to these self-similar beings.

c. Apu Qolqepunku

On the Monday afternoon before the feast of Corpus Christi, I was standing shoulder-to-shoulder packed inside the church at the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine with about one thousand other men to celebrate a mass that was being held exclusively for a type of ritual dancer called an ukuku. This was the mass for the ukukus and no one else. The doors of the church were closed, or rather, they were barricaded shut with the congestion of our ukuku bodies. Several hundred more ukukus who could not fit inside the church stood in the plaza outside. For that occasion, I decided not to stand in my priestly vestments behind the altar with my back to Quyllurit’i but rather to stand in the crowd dressed as an ukuku with my face toward Quyllurit’i. I asked the other Jesuit priests to take the role at the altar for this mass since I wanted to take the role of the ukuku. I had already been “baptized” an ukuku four years prior to this day, so I was a bit familiar with the role that I was wanting to perform. At the end of this mass, I knew that our mission would be to carry several crosses from the shrine higher up the mountain and to plant them into the different glacial tongues of the mountain, and I wanted to be a part of it again, but this time, while playing yet another role—the role of ethnographic fieldworker.

At the end of the mass, we started to blow a rhythmic, five-beat sound into the small plastic bottles tied around our necks. Huh-huh-huhhhh-huh-huh. Huh-huh-huhhhh-huh-huh. And on and on we went as our bodies bounced up, down, and out the side door of the church.
Meanwhile, as we flowed out, the *ukukus* who had been standing in the plaza outside the front of the church began to flow in. They wanted to receive the same thing that we were receiving as we moved out—water. Just before crossing the threshold out the side door of the church, the priests and members of *La Hermandad* drenched us with buckets and buckets of holy water. Four years prior, I had found the same event quite exhilarating and exciting. This time I found the collective effervescence of the crowd a bit frightening (Durkheim 2016 [1912]). I had become a little more critical of what the collective energy or *animu* of a crowd was capable of. Life-forces like *animu* not only “give life” but “deal death” as well in sometimes violent and brutal ways. Once again, congested and condensed spaces are powerful places.

As we moved outside the church, the union of our bodies that had been inside the church broke up into eight separate factions as different groups of *ukukus* began to escort eight crosses to different locations higher up the mountain. Each group represented a particular *nación* (“nation”) which roughly corresponded to the provinces in the Peruvian state from which that group originates. The one exception was Tahuantinsuyu, which is not a province; rather, it is the name that the Inkans used to refer to their capital city, which is now Cusco. As mentioned in the Introduction, the Inkan state was organized into four separate sections called *suyus*, and the capital was regarded as the place where the four parts intersect. The word Tahuantinsuyu literally means in Quechua, “the place where the four parts come together.” The Tahuantinsuyu nation that was present at the contemporary shrine of Quyllurit’i included all of the *comparsas* (smaller groups of pilgrims) from the city of Cusco. At my home in Pacchanta, I lived in the Quispicanchis province, and I had been baptized into the Quispicanchis nation four years earlier, so when we exited the church and began moving the crosses up the mountain, I looked for the red and white tunics of the Quispicanchis nation and began moving my body, dressed in the same colours, toward them.

By the time that I got out of the church, I saw that the Quispicanchis nation of *ukukus* was already well ahead of me making their way up the mountain, so I took off hiking as fast as I could to catch up with them, which was not easy at 4,800 metres above sea level and rising. As I gained elevation, I must have appeared to be quite the strange sight moving toward them—and not only because I was the only white guy dressed as an *ukuku* at the festival—but because I was not a member of their *comparsa* which was chosen in advance to represent the Quispicanchis nation in carrying the cross to the glacier. Not all *ukukus* take the crosses to the glacier, only the *ukukus* of the *comparsas* that had been chosen in advance. Later that night, all of the *ukukus* would gather around the cross at the edge of the glacier, but for this particular part, only a select few go. When I finally got closer to the *comparsa* going up the mountain,
one ukuku blew his whistle at me from a distance and shouted, “Hey! What comparsa are you from?” I shouted back, “I’m from Pacchanta.” When I got right up next to them, the same ukuku asked me, “Where is Pacchanta?” He and no one else knew. I said, “It’s just over there,” and I pointed in the direction of Ausangate.

Just one month prior to this day, on the feast of the Ascension, I had been very close to that same spot on the mountain where the ukuku stopped me but that time I was not a stranger. I was rather with people that I knew from Pacchanta and with other comparsas from the local district of Ocongante. However, instead of continuing to make our way up toward the glacier, this smaller contingent of ukukus from the local area stopped and set up their cross on the bare rocks well below the edge of the glacier. I asked Juvenal, the same Juvenal from the beginning of this chapter, “Why are we stopping here and not going all the way up to the glacier?” He responded, “Because we are just a small nation. The bigger nations will go all the way up during Corpus Christi.” It appears that social hierarchies are displayed through different positions on the mountain. Only the bigger and more powerful nations go all the way up. The nation of Quispicanchis is hierarchically more encompassing than the district of Ocongate and the even smaller annex of Pacchanta; hence, it is more powerful.

As I attempted to integrate myself into the comparsa of ukukus that was going all the way up to the glacier, I was able to do so in large part because of my own participation in the hierarchical structure of the pilgrimage. Hanging down from my neck on a wide red ribbon was a badge that identified me as a Jesuit priest. Other authorities of the festival wore similar identification badges which allowed them to move into, out of, and around the shrine with ease. While the priests wore their badges on a red ribbon, members of La Hermandad wore theirs on a purple one. The barricades that the ukukus formed around the shrine to control the flow of traffic in and out of the church could easily be broken with these powerful red and purple badges. The same, I suspected, would be true in the movement up the mountain. When the ukukus saw my badge and I explained to them that I was a priest and a baptized ukuku, they allowed me to come along with them to the glacier. Without that badge, I am fairly certain that I would have been turned around.

When we finally reached the edge of the glacier, we discovered that another comparsa of ukukus was already there. As we brought the cross closer to the glacier to plant it in the ice, the other group of ukukus pleaded with us not to go onto the ice. They said that they were there to protect the glacier and that they had been there all day keeping other pilgrims from entering onto it. They informed us that the glacier is melting and that we should keep off it to prevent it from melting further. After a bit of discussion back and forth between the two groups, it was
finally resolved that only a few *ukukus* would go onto the ice with the cross. Content to stay behind, I nevertheless was invited to come along, so I stepped onto the glacier with about a dozen other *ukukus.*

Once we positioned the cross in the ice, a few *ukukus* knelt down in front of it, and the *caporal* (“captain”) of the *comparsa* approached them with a whip. He proceeded to strike them with three lashes: “In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.” This was their *baustimo* (“baptism”). They were now *ukukus.* After being whipped, they stood up, kissed the whip, and embraced the whipper. It was explained to me that the whipping takes away the person’s sins and that the whipper absorbs the sins into himself. I had already been baptized in this way several years prior, so fortunately, I did not have to go through that painful experience again. The whipping hurt much more than I was expecting, leaving a deep bruise on my butt for a few weeks. If the baptisms were painful, the *penitencias* (“penances”) were even worse. After the baptisms, another few *ukukus* were whipped for some kind of crime/sin/offence that they had committed such as drinking too much alcohol. They were picked up by their legs and arms and stretched out with their chest facing down. The whipper proceeded to strike them with blows much more powerful than the ones dealt for baptism. After a few hard strikes “In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,” they were put back down to stand on their feet, and they too kissed the whip and hugged the whipper. Much laughter accompanied the seriousness and violence of it all.

With the cross now planted in the ice and the baptisms and penances complete, we moved back down off the glacier and onto the rocks to join the rest of the group. We then proceeded to have a meeting to discuss various administrative concerns of the pilgrimage. One topic that created quite a bit of debate involved our *trajes,* our “costumes” or “outfits.” Some *ukukus* were being criticized for not wearing the appropriate attire. It was emphasized that we all need to wear the same thing and should not deviate from the norm. When one young *ukuku* was about to be whipped for not wearing the correct *traje,* another *ukuku* intervened and said, “How can he be expected to know what to wear when we haven’t held a meeting to standardize the attire?” It was agreed that the young *ukuku* shouldn’t be whipped and that more meetings should be held throughout the year to clarify the uniform and what it means to be a proper *ukuku.*

---

9 In the next chapter, I discuss this conflict at greater length as well as the way in which the *ukuku* has been described as a “trickster figure” in the Andean ethnographic literature.
A few minutes later, as the meeting continued, an ukuku named Kevin came over to me and commented on what I was wearing. He asked, “Why are you wearing that doll?” I said, “Well, the guy who made this traje for me gave me this doll to wear.” The guy to whom I was referring was Lucio. When I left his house for the shrine, Lucio said, “you need a little doll that looks like an ukuku, but I don’t have one, so here, take this one. It’ll do.” The doll that Lucio gave me was in the figure of a Quechua-speaking woman dressed in a pollera skirt and wearing a wide-brimmed hat called a montera. She held a baby in her arms. When the ukuku saw the doll of a woman attached to my body, and not the doll of an ukuku, he told me to get the right doll next time. “Like this one,” he said, and he showed me his doll which looked like a miniature version of himself.

When I went to the shrine with the comparsa from Pacchanta for the feast of the Ascension, I remember that Juvenal had a name for his doll. He called it “Luchito,” which is an affectionate way of saying “Little Fighter.” He gave it some cañazo (“sugarcane alcohol”) to drink, and he said that it gives him fuerza (“force” and “strength”). As Allen (2016) has similarly described, the ukuku’s doll is his animu. The doll, like an inqaychu and like a demanada, is a powerful container of animu, and it is another piece that is simultaneously a whole. The doll is the ukuku, not only a representation.

During the feast of the Ascension, I was not dressed as an ukuku, so I had no issues with the doll, but during the Corpus Christi event, I apparently had the wrong animu attached to my body, and it needed to be corrected. Following a fractal logic, I needed to wear a miniature version of myself in a reproduction of sameness, not difference. I felt a bit embarrassed, and I’m still not sure if Lucio really thought that the gendered identity of the doll did not matter or if he was playing a joke on me! For the ukukus, at least, having the “correct doll” very much did matter.
Hiking up to the glacier with the “wrong doll” on my body

The congestion of the pilgrimage shrine is seen below/above me in the photo

I later purchased the “right doll” from a shop in Ocongate

When the meeting at the edge of the glacier was over, we left the cross in the ice and returned back down to the shrine marching in a long line of fairly uniform bodies. Our mission to plant the cross in the ice was complete. Now we could get some rest before we had to go back up later that night to retrieve the cross. Around 2am the next day all of the *ukukus* from all the nations ascended to the different glacial tongues of the mountain where their crosses had been similarly planted in the ice. What took place at the edge of the glacier that night was in many ways a repetition of the same pattern that I just described, but this time, at a bigger
scale that involved many more *ukukus*. Baptisms of new members were performed through whippings. Penances were delivered. And a big meeting was held to discuss various administrative concerns. During this meeting, a new leader of the nation was elected as well. At sunrise, we concluded the meeting, retrieved the cross from the glacier, and descended with it back down to the shrine in an even longer line of fairly uniform *ukuku* bodies. There were probably about five hundred of us from the Quispicanchis nation alone.

The timing of our descent coincided with the seven other nations who were scattered out on different parts of the mountain. As our line of bodies began moving down, we could see seven other long lines of *ukukus* moving down as well. We were all headed toward the same spot, the shrine, where our eight lines would intersect. As I tried to keep up with the *ukuku* in front of me and stay in front of the *ukuku* behind me, my pulse was racing fast, and I felt like I had been swept up in a river that was rushing down the mountain. Somehow I was able to keep the flow with the others as I jumped from rock to rock. Between the running, the altitude, the lack of sleep, the coca leaves, and the little bit of alcohol that we had been sipping “to keep warm,” I felt pretty high as we cascaded down over the rocks. When we converged at the shrine with the crosses, a final mass was held in the plaza outside the church. The archbishop of Cusco presided. When the mass was complete, the *comparsas* retrieved their *demandas* from inside the church, and they began to make their various ways home in many different lines away from the shrine.

A small piece of the line of *ukukus* from the Quispicanchis nation stopping for a moment while descending in order to coordinate our convergence at the shrine with the lines of the other nations.
Qolqepunku is the name of the mountain peak above the shrine from which the *ukukus* descended, and like Ausangate, this mountain is not only a place but also a person. Qolqepunku is an *Apu* who is inextricably connected to Apu Ausangate in a hierarchically encompassing form of relation. Qolqepunku is another head of Ausangate and another one of his agents. This one especially helps with financial concerns. *Qolqe* is the Quechua word for silver, and like *plata*, the Spanish word for silver, both *qolqe* and *plata* also mean “cash.” *Punku* is the Quechua word for “gate,” so Qolqepunku literally means Silver/Cash Gate. Qolqepunku is a gate through which wealth might be attained. Pilgrimages to him can be quite beneficial. Some pilgrims, mostly coming from urban environments and critical of the Christian elements of the shrine, do not go inside the church at all to see Quyllurit’i. Instead, they bring their petitions and offerings straight to the *Apu* above the shrine.

However, for many of my interlocutors from Pacchanta, these two entities—Qolqepunku and Quyllurit’i—are not totally distinct and separate persons. Quyllurit’i is a metaperson who is inextricably connected to the metaperson who hovers over him. The proximity of the boulder to the glacier as well as Quyllurit’i’s very name, “Shining Snow,” indicate this intrinsic link between the boulder and the glaciated mountain (Salas Carreño 2014). Just as Qolqepunku is a piece of Ausangate’s body, Quyllurit’i is a piece of Qolqepunku’s. And all of these rock persons, of course, are pieces of Pachamama in a relationship that is characterized by hierarchical encompassment. They are all fractal extensions of one another.

I would like to propose that the movement of the *demandas* to and from the shrine and the movement of the crosses up and down the mountain is a way to establish links or highways that connect these distinct yet intimately related entities. The movement of the crosses and the *demandas* opens up pathways through which the *animu* moving between these entities may flow. Allen (1997) and Salas Carreño (2014) have observed that the boulder in the church is like a larger version of an *inqaychu*; it is a means by which Qolqepunku channels his animating force. I agree, and I would like to add that the *animu* that the *ukukus* exude in moving the crosses up and down between Quyllurit’i and Qolqepunku opens up the pathway for this channelling to occur, and furthermore, the *animu* that all of the pilgrims expend in bringing their *demandas* to and from the shrine opens up even more pathways for this animating power to flow. Once the transfer of *animu* has been re-established through the return of the crosses to the shrine every year, the *demandas* that have been sitting next to the boulder may return to the places from which they came to bring vitality to those places. The *demandas* and the crosses
carried by the *comparsas* and the *ukukus* are the means by which the greater power of more distant metapersons is channelled, drawn in, and brought to one’s home.

d. Mass at Juvenal’s House

With the altar set and the *demanda* in place next to the hungry rock, we were now ready to proceed with the mass at Juvenal’s house. It was a wonderfully sunny day at the beginning of the transition from the wet to the dry season. Several mountain *Apus* could be seen in the distance: Qolqepunku, Ausangate, and even Salkantay all the way on the other side of Cusco. I stumbled over the prayers in Quechua and asked others to do the longer readings. I kept the homily short and proceeded to transubstantiate the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. I raised the one large host and said, “This is the body of Christ” followed by the cup, “This is the blood of Christ.” Similar to the relation between an *inqaychu* and an *apu*, and the icon and Quyllurit’i, this was a piece of Christ’s body which was also all of it. In Catholic cosmology, the Eucharist is not a metaphor. The bread and wine is the body and blood of Christ distributed out across space and time in a fractal and recursive pattern. After the consecration, I passed the body and blood around to the others, and we all consumed. I wondered whether or not the rock was eating and drinking with us as well.

After the concluding prayer, I stood up to bless the water to help make it holy and Juvenal proceeded to guide me around his farm to douse the troublesome places with the water. We started with the rock adjacent to the altar. After splashing it with water, he then told me how the *raíces* (“roots”) of the rock were growing underground and how they were making their way into his home. So, he took me inside the house and showed me how the rock is entering the house in a corner beside the bed. So, I doused that part of the rock as well. As I came to discover, the rock was not simply located behind the house as I initially thought, but it was also within the house. Like the boulder at the pilgrimage shrine, half of the rock was inside the house and half of it was outside.

Juvenal then took me to other spots around the farm such as the gates to the alpaca corrals and the rock walls around them, springs where water emerges from the ground, foot bridges over streams, small ponds, and cave-like spaces in between large boulders. Gabriela, Juvenal’s wife, watched us from a distance. At times she would point to a particular place and shout to us from afar to make sure that we hit that spot as well. Unfortunately, like on other occasions with Quechua-speaking women, my conversation with Gabriela was limited due to my basic knowledge of the language. Nevertheless, in that context, I could at least understand
where she wanted us to go, at least, the general area. With Juvenal’s further assistance in Spanish, I could get a few more details on the more precise places to hit with the water. Similar to other occasions in which this ritual was performed, it seemed to me that the focus of our attention was always on the threshold places between one thing and another. Gates, walls, springs, bridges, ponds, caves, and a rock that was both inside and outside the house.

As I walked around the farm splashing these thresholds with holy water, I found myself, in the silence of my thoughts, telling the *malos vientos* (“bad winds”) to fuck off and to leave this family in peace. I was quite surprised with myself because I did not really believe in *malos vientos*, except maybe in a metaphorical sense. However, as I have reflected more on that time and space of fieldwork, I have come to discover that casting out is not exactly what my interlocutors were asking from me. This was not an exorcism. Instead of simply casting out, we were opening up and what we were opening up were pathways—routes through which *animu* might flow in as well as out.

*Animu*, as I described in Chapter One and in the Introduction, is a powerful life-force that brings health, wealth, and fertility, but at the same time, it also can cause great harm, sickness, and death. The idea is to open up pathways or routes through which the helpful *animu* may be drawn in and the harmful *animu* cast out. Thresholds get congested, and they need a little opening up sometimes to keep things flowing through them. The vital processes flowing through this “circulatory cosmos” (Gose 2019) need to be managed in order to keep things moving. Performing a similar holy water ritual on a different occasion, a man named Simeon told me he could imagine the *malos vientos* flying away like condors as we walked around splashing the various threshold sites around his home. But water does not only carry the harm away; water, of course, brings life in as well, so it is channelled in as it flows down from the *Apu* mountain peaks.

In Chapters One and Two, I described how the tallest mountains are considered to be the most powerful ones because they have the broadest point of view. They can see the farthest outward so their domain extends out to include greater realms. While I still think that this is the case, I would like to add that being the tallest mountains, they are also so powerful because they are the ultimate sources of water (Gose 2018b). Their peaks are the origin points from which life and death flows through water.

Salas Carreño (2016) proposes that Quechua-speaking farmers establish relations with mountains and other features of the landscape in the same way that they establish relations with kin, the primary mechanisms being food circulation and cohabitation. Through sharing food and living in the same location as named places like mountains, humans include the landscape
into the network of intimate kin relations. Peter Gose (2018a), however, objects to this proposal and argues that named places are not kin but rather personifications that mimic people’s relationship to more powerful outsiders like state officials. He says that the personification of mountains is the result of people’s vulnerability to the landscape and to outside officials. The landscape, like the state, can be harsh, violent and cruel. But the landscape and the state can also give much needed resources like water and money. So, the strategy is to draw in the more powerful outsider through practices such as sharing coca, food, and alcohol in order to draw benefit and avoid harm. However, despite the sociality established with the outside official and with the mountain, Gose argues that the official and the mountain must always remain “not kin” because to fully incorporate the other would diminish the power of the outsider (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1995; Viveiros de Castro 2001).

I agree with Gose that relations with mountains reflect relations with more powerful persons, but I do not think that this necessarily makes mountains not-kin. They are simply more powerful kin which is why people often refer to them as Taytakuna (“Fathers”). In this sense, I agree with Salas Carreño that mountains are kin, at least the ones that are drawn into that relation through various practices. However, I do not think that “feeding practices” are how kin relations with mountains are established. As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, feeding practices reflect relations of ownership. An owner is a person who gives you food, and humans are certainly not the owners of mountains. Rather, it is the other way around. Mountains are the owners of humans. Ausangate, for example, is even called munayniyuq (“the owner of the will”) (de la Cadena 2015). As an owner, Ausangate is the one who feeds humans, not the other way around.

The substances that are given to mountains such as coca leaves, alcohol, and the body and blood of Christ are not food, and they include things that humans would never eat such as seashells and flowers (Gose 2018a; Kosiba 2015); rather, they are sacrifices, and the sacrificial characteristics of these offerings reinforce the asymmetrical form of relation between mountains and humans. We were not feeding that rock at Juvenal’s house in the same way that we might feed a dog; rather, we were making a sacrifice to it. Feeding is done from higher positions of power; sacrifices are performed from the less powerful. Sacrifices are petitions to more powerful entities asking them to feed us. Without these sacrificial gifts, humans run the danger of being consumed themselves. The coca leaf that is held up to the mountain before being ingested by humans is analogous to the communion wafer that Catholic priests hold up during the mass before being similarly consumed. Sacrificial practices seek to establish kin relations with more powerful others petitioning them to be our parents and to feed us. Again,
this is why the mountains are called Taytakuna (“Fathers”), and Pachamama, of course, is Pachamama. Mountains are “potential affines” (Viveiros de Castro 2001), but unlike the usual understanding of affinity through marriage, this is affinity through potential parenthood. The same logic is at play with godparents and mountains as I described in Chapter One. In this system, the power of the outsider is not diminished; rather, the exact opposite is the case: the power of the outsider increases as more children are incorporated into the family. In this process, alterity is consumed and identification is magnified.

e. Conclusion

In the fractal system that I have been describing in this chapter, sacrificial exchange is one of the primary mechanisms that allows fractals to expand. Descola writes, “the characteristic feature of a sacrifice is precisely the fact that it establishes a link between two terms initially unconnected, the purpose of the operation being, to cite Lévi-Strauss’s definition ‘to establish a relation, not of resemblance but of contiguity, by means of a series of successive identifications’” (2013: 229). Sacrifice opens a pathway through which links to initially unconnected entities may be made. The sacrifice of the ukukus links Quyllurit’i to Qolqepunku, and the sacrifice that the pilgrims make in travelling to and from the shrine links these powerful metapersons to their everyday lives where they can be helpful in dealing with things such as that rock at Juvenal’s house. When these links are established, what were initially unconnected entities become part of the same fractal system, and as more and more entities are included and encompassed within that system, the fractal expands and gains more power.

While I initially thought that fractals such as river systems and mountain chains were “beautiful patterns in nature,” I have more lately come to be a bit afraid of their philosophical implications. Unlike Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) idea of a rhizome, which is a pattern that is always in the process of becoming otherwise, a fractal is a pattern that becomes simply by replicating the same versions of itself at larger and larger scales. What might appear as the generation of being is simply a reproduction of the same being. In a fractal system, difference is encompassed by sameness, and alterity is made into identity at ever increasing scales.

At the beginning of this chapter, I began with a few verses from a poem by William Blake:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour
These verses appear to follow a fractal logic. An entire world is in a grain of sand, and a grain of sand is an entire world. The microcosm is the macrocosm, and the macro is the micro. While some may find the symmetry and order of a fractal system like this to be quite beautiful and pleasing to look at, I find it quite frightening for the way in which it reduces everything to sameness. But, maybe Blake knew this. He does not say “to see the World in a Grain of Sand” or “the Heaven in a Wild Flower.” Rather, he writes, “a World” and “a Heaven” which suggests that there are multiple possible worlds and heavens to inhabit. There is not only one, a one to which others must conform. Pathways, routes, roads, and interoceanic highways do not have to be opened up simply to incorporate alterity. Might it be possible to open up lines of connection that still give difference a place to breathe?
Chapter 4: At the Edge of a Melting Glacier

We stand on top of the mountain and it does not seem to us that simply there are so many lines extending across the field of our vision, as when we stand in front of a map or a painting, it is because we feel the distance, the vastness of the space. In the movement of the wind in the fields below and in the clouds above, we feel the force of geological and cosmic time (Lingis 1998: 120).

a. The Ukuku In-Between

Approaching the glacier above the Quylluritʼi pilgrimage shrine with a group of ukukus, I could see in the distance above us another group of ukukus standing at the edge of the ice. As our line of bodies moved vertically up the mountain in a zig-zagging pattern, their bodies spread horizontally across the glacierʼs edge in a straight line. Unlike Lingisʼs observation about the feeling of being in the mountains, there were indeed “many lines extending across the field of our vision.” When these two lines of ukukus converged and formed a more congested crowd, there was a bit of a clash. For the group of ukukus with whom I was travelling, it was our intention to plant a wooden cross into the ice which we had just carried up from the shrine below, but when we attempted to do this, the other group of ukukus pleaded with us not to move onto the ice. They told us that the glacier is melting and that they are there to protect it which includes keeping anyone from trespassing onto the ice. “People are polluting the environment,” they said, “which is causing the ice to disappear.” The group of ukukus with the cross, however, insisted on the importance of planting the cross into the ice like they do every year during the festival. A compromise was finally reached in which a select few ukukus, instead of all, went onto the glacier with the cross. What was happening here? Why did some ukukus want to plant the cross into the glacier and others wanted to prevent the practice?

While seemingly a minor affair, the conflict between the ukukus is illustrative of a wider tension in the pilgrimage surrounding climate change that has attracted a significant amount of attention in the international media. To give a sense of some of the ways in which the pilgrimage has been represented, here are a few headlines from various news outlets:

“The Ukukus Wonder Why a Sacred Glacier Melts in Peru’s Andes: it could portend world’s end, so mountain worshipers are stewarding the ice”
(Regalado 2005 Wall Street Journal)

“The Sacred Glacier Is Melting But The Festival Goes”
(Dupraz-Dobias 2016 National Public Radio)
“Peru’s Glaciers Are Melting Away, Along With Ancient Andean Traditions” (Watling 2018 *Newsweek*)

“Climate Change Equals Culture Change in the Andes: melting sacred glaciers and other fundamental changes confront the Andes’s Quechua-speaking farmers” (Fraser 2009 *Scientific American*)

In this chapter, I explore the conflict between the *ukukus* at the edge of the glacier, and I show how it reflects broader tensions surrounding climate change and the relationship between humans and the environment in an Age that some are calling the Anthropocene. I begin by describing the role of the *ukuku* in the pilgrimage as a “trickster” figure caught in-between various modes of existence. I then argue that the conflict at the edge of the glacier is rooted in different ontological assumptions about what the glacier is. For the *ukukus* with the cross, the glacier is a more powerful *Apu* with whom to enter into a relation of sacrificial communion in order to appropriate some of its power. For the other group of *ukukus*, however, the glacier is not a more powerful *Apu* but a less powerful entity that is dying and in need of human protection. I proceed to argue that this narrative of protection is a performance of indigeneity among *ukukus* from urban centres that conforms to stereotypical representations of indigenous peoples as “protectors of the environment.” In light of a glacier that has been rapidly melting over the past several decades, I move on to consider particular notions of time that are embedded in the Quechua language, and I discuss a Quechua understanding that the present is built on a series of catastrophes from the past. I then compare this to typical representations of climate change in the media which emphasise catastrophe as something that awaits us in the future. In order to dig a little bit into where apocalyptic narratives in the media of future disaster might be coming from, I proceed to discuss debates from the Enlightenment between the so-called Catastrophists and Uniformitarians which concern the rate at which geological change occurs and the degree to which human beings are responsible for it. I end that section by suggesting that those debates linger on in the present, and in the conclusion, I return to the conflict at the edge of the ice to show how it illustrates a key philosophical tension concerning the human relationship to the environment.

In order to better understand the conflict between the *ukukus* at the edge of the ice, I first need to explain the figure of the *ukuku* a bit more. The word *ukuku* derives from the Quechua word *ukumari*, which means “bear,” specifically the type of spectacled bear that lives on the forested mountain slopes in between the high Andes and the Amazon. Based on a well-known story in Andean oral tradition, the *ukuku* character is framed as the result of a sexual
encounter between a spectacled bear and a human woman (Allen 1983; Sallnow 1987). The resultant half-man and half-bear is both a comical and fearsome creature who is known for his voracious appetite and sexual virility. While some frame the ukuku as half-man and half-bear, others however, have suggested that the ukuku is half-man/half-alpaca (Flores Ochoa 1990). This perception of the ukuku as an alpaca-man seems to be the basis for the ukuku’s other name, pablitó, which derives from the Quechua word for alpaca, paqucha (Salas Carreño 2020). Regardless, whether half-alpaca or bear, the ukuku is a comical and frightening monstrous mixture of human and animal.

A similar dynamic is at play in the ukuku’s status in between human and spirit. The glacier that hovers above the shrine is said to be haunted by a host of evil spirits with putrid bodies called condenados (“condemned ones” in Spanish) or kukuchis in Quechua. These are the spiritual bodies of dead humans who lived sinful lives with the greatest offence that they committed being incest. For their crimes, they are unable to make the transition to the realm of the dead and are trapped in putrid bodies in a perpetual state of rot and decay. They are also said to be in fruitless pursuit of a silver cross at the top of the mountain, but as a part of their cursed existence, they are unable to reach the summit as they keep slipping on the ice and falling back down much like the figure of Sisyphus rolling a boulder up a hill in Hades for all of eternity. One of the jobs of the ukus is to protect the other pilgrims from the danger of the kukuchis, but in this role, they have sometimes been identified as kukuchis themselves (Sallnow 1987).

When I went on the pilgrimage in 2019 for the feast of Corpus Christi, the correlation between the ukuku and the kukuchi was cast in both a frightening and a funny way as if I was watching a dark comedy unfold. As I was resting with a group of ukus on our way to the glacier in the middle of the night underneath a full moon, the shadowy figure of an ukuku from another group stumbled toward us moaning in pain with his arms outstretched like a zombie roaming the streets in a horror film. The group that I was with reacted by laughing hysterically and pretending to be afraid as they shouted, “¡Kukuchi!” Combinations of fear and fun, human and animal, human and spirit, is the work of the ukuku.

Satirical performances in which otherness is imitated and put on display are common activities of the ukus during the festival, and tourists are a frequent target which the crowds tend to find particularly entertaining. For example, during the smaller festival on the feast of the Ascension, I saw a tourist using expensive Sony video equipment to film one of the dances, and following the tourist was an ukuku with an old, broken cassette player using it as if it was a video recorder to film the tourist who was filming them. Meanwhile, the audience roared in
laughter. The image of an ukuku acting like a tourist (but with “poorer technology” in hand) was a satirical performance that highlighted the relative wealth of the tourist with his expensive camera and the relative poverty of the ukuku with his broken cassette player.

Another comedic performance that I saw involved an ukuku acting like a miner. On the way to the shrine, I saw him pulling around a yellow toy plastic dump truck filled with rocks and announcing to the crowd in his high voice (which is characteristic of ukuku speech and may be said to mimic a “female voice”) that he had struck it rich and is trucking out tons of gold from the mountain. Ukukus are experts of mimicry and satire; they imitate different kinds of people in order to draw boundaries around what kinds of people there are.

Michael Sallnow describes the ukuku as “an ambivalent, tricksterlike figure, who both preserves order through his constabulary role and is at liberty to subvert it through his jokes and burlesque” (1987: 218). I would like to suggest that the “jokes and burlesque” performed by the ukuku and his ambivalence as a character caught in-between different states of being ultimately reinforces and reinstates a particular type of order. By crossing the boundaries between categories such as human, animal, spirit, tourist, male, and female, the performance of the ukuku reinstates these very categories. In mixing these categories and making that mixture something to laugh at or be afraid of, the ukuku shows that this mixture is not the normal order of things so paradoxically ends up re-establishing the very order that was disrupted. The ukuku is above all an authoritative, order-keeping character even though some of the ways in which this is expressed is through “jokes and burlesque” (cf. Basso 1979; Brightman 1999; Course 2013b; Gluckman 1963; Howard 1993; Hyde 1998).

The final liminal characteristic of the ukuku that I would like to consider is the ukuku’s status “in-between” “indigenous” and “mestizo.” Many of the ukukus that participate in the main festival today just before the feast of Corpus Christi may be considered to be what de la Cadena calls “indigenous mestizos” (2000). These are people who have rural origins but now live in cities such as Cusco and speak Spanish. Given that they are not campesino farmers nor monolingual Quechua-speakers, they identify as mestizo. However, they engage in many of the practices of their “indigenous” parents and grandparents such as going on the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage and making burnt offerings called despachos to the Apus. By engaging in these practices while speaking Spanish and living in the city, they hold together the dual identity of an “indigenous mestizo.”

---

10 I discuss in much more detail the fluidity of the categories, “indigenous” and “mestizo,” in the next chapter.
The participation of indigenous mestizos in the pilgrimage as *ukukus* is a fairly recent phenomenon. Before the tremendous growth of the festival, due in part to the construction of the Interoceanic Highway, the majority of pilgrims, including *ukukus*, who went to the shrine would have been considered “indigenous” since they were primarily Quechua-speakers from rural communities in the region around the shrine. The practice of taking the crosses from the shrine and planting them in the glacial ice that I more fully detailed in the last chapter would have been performed by these so-called “indigenous” *ukukus*. However, as I indicated in the previous chapter, many of the Quechua-speaking people from the area around the shrine no longer participate in the “traditional” practices of the pilgrimage anymore such as taking the crosses up to the glacier. Instead, they go to the shrine one month prior to the main festival for the feast day of the Ascension and many use the Corpus Christi event as an opportunity to make some cash. The conflict that I witnessed at the edge of the glacier is a result of clashes between different groups of *ukukus* who have different ontological assumptions about what the glacier is and how humans should relate to it. In the next section, I articulate what some of these different assumptions are.

b. Sacrificial Communion and Differentiation

For many of the *ukukus* who carry the crosses from the shrine up to the glacier, the glacier is an *Apu*, or at least, it is a piece of the *Apu’s* body, a piece that is simultaneously a whole. As I described in the last chapter, the practice of taking the crosses from the shrine to the *Apu*, planting them in the ice, then returning the crosses to the shrine is a sacrificial performance that works to draw in some of the *Apu’s* superior power. The movement of the crosses is a way of making a connection to the *Apu* and opening up pathways through which the *Apu’s animu* might flow from the outside to the inside, from above to below. Also to recall from the previous chapter, once the crosses have been returned to the shrine, then the *comparsas* (“groups of pilgrims”) may take their *demandas* (“icons”) back to their communities now recharged with the “grace” of the *Apu*. The *demandas* will help bring blessings for the year ahead until they need to be returned the following year. The movement of the *demandas* and the crosses establishes pathways that direct the flow of *animu* and link different entities together into one system of sacrificial exchange.

In Michael Scott’s (2000) terms, this is a “poly-ontological cosmology” that is working to pull the various pieces together and weave them into a single whole. He proposes that poly-ontological cosmologies “assume an original state of plurality,” and the “first-order burden on
“praxis” is to “create unifying relations among multiple pre-existing categories of being” (Scott 2000: 72). Once unifying relations have been established, however, poly-ontological cosmologies face a “second-order burden;” that is, “they must [. . .] find ways to preserve their distinctive identities without rupturing the ties they have formed and reverting to primordial disjunction” (ibid.). In other words, once the disjunctive cosmos has been pulled together, how is it possible to keep the pieces separate and distinguishable without returning to the differentiating pieces from which it all began?

“Mono-ontological cosmologies,” on the other hand, work the other way around. Instead of assuming an original state of plurality, Scott proposes that “mono-ontological cosmologies assume the primordial one-ness of all things” and that the “primary burden on praxis is to achieve and maintain differentiation” (ibid.). Once these differentiations have been achieved, however, mono-ontological cosmologies face a similar “second-order burden;” that is, “to establish productive relations between the categories achieved through separation without undoing the process of differentiation and reverting to primordial unity” (ibid.). In other words, once the cosmos has been broken up into pieces, how is possible to put the pieces back together again without returning to the undifferentiated whole from which it all began?

Moreover, Scott argues that “in neither system is one extreme valued to the exclusion of the other; actors in both systems attempt to reach what Lévi-Strauss (1983: 255) characterizes as ‘the threshold, undoubtedly the most profitable in human societies, of a just equilibrium between their unity and diversity’” (2000: 72). Radical sameness nor radical difference is the ideal; rather, it is something in-between. Mono- and poly-ontological cosmologies simply have different starting points from which to reach the same equilibrium.

Sacrifice, in the way that I have been describing it in the context of the pilgrimage, is a way of making unifying relations between distinct entities; it is about weaving a poly-ontological cosmos together. Descola writes: “the characteristic feature of a sacrifice is precisely the fact that it establishes a link between two terms initially unconnected, the purpose of the operation being, to cite Lévi-Strauss’s definition, ‘to establish a relation, not of resemblance but of contiguity, by means of a successive series of identifications’” (2013: 229). Sacrifice, according to Descola and Lévi-Strauss, brings together terms which were initially separate and alter to one another. The movement is from difference and plurality to identity and union.

I would like to suggest that the despacho “food offering” to the mountains that I discussed in the previous three chapters is an example of a sacrificial practice that works within a poly-ontological cosmos. A despacho consists of a variety of “ingredients” which are
gathered together into a bundle and wrapped in a sheet of paper. The bundle is then burned which is a way of sending the essence or animu of the ingredients to mountains such as Ausangate to consume. Each element in the despacho carries with it a particular message, so it is important to get the mixture just right if the mountain is going to respond propitiously. The ingredients in the bundle consist of a number of things such as coca leaves, alpaca fat, and hard candies. It may also include elements that are more “exotic” and that come from distant places such as seashells from the ocean and flowers from the Amazon. The despacho is a way of bringing a diversity of things together and of incorporating alterity; it is a work of enclosure and encompassment. As I have been emphasising throughout this thesis, mountains such as Ausangate are so powerful because they are composed of a great multiplicity of pieces; they are “plural singularities” (Fausto 2012), and the more things that are contained within an entity like a mountain, the more power or animu that entity has. Despachos are one of the ways in which mountains like Ausangate incorporate more substances into themselves and grow more powerful. Within this poly-ontological framework, the movement is from the many to the one—of pulling the pieces together from places as far away as the ocean.

While sacrificial practices such as despacho offerings bring disparate things together into a relation of “contiguity” (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 225), sacrifice also works the other way around—that is, it works to separate and to break things apart. For example, in describing witch-hunts as a form of sacrifice in Vanuatu, Knut Rio writes, “the witch-hunt closes an opening between realms in which too much continuity has occurred. We can say that the witch trial re-establishes the tenuous separateness of realms” (2014: 337-338). On a similar note, David Graeber writes:

> In a larger sense, sacrifice—in all Nilotic religions the paradigmatic ritual—is about the re-establishment of boundaries. Divinity has entered into the world; the ordinary divisions of the cosmos (for instance, between humans, animals, and gods) have become confused; the result is illness or catastrophe. So while sacrifice is, here as everywhere, a way of entering into communication with the Divine, it is ultimately a way of putting Divinity back in its proper place (2011: 45).

And he adds, “[sacrifice] restores a world of separations” (2011: 45). Depending on the particular context, sacrifice might work toward pulling things together or breaking them apart. Mayblin and Course recognize this dual function of sacrifice when they write that it includes “a variety of processes concerned with collapsing and restoring ontological divides” (2014: 316).
When I approached the glacier with the *ukukus*, the idea was to establish “contiguity” (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 225) with the *Apu* by moving our bodies onto the glacier and planting the cross into the ice. Contact and physical touch was important. The other group of *ukukus*, however, who arrived at the glacier before us, would not have it. “No,” they said. “The glacier is melting, and no one should go onto the ice.” They had designated themselves “protectors” or “guardians” of the glacier which put them into a very different relation to the glacier than the *ukukus* with the cross. While the *ukukus* with the cross approached a more powerful *Apu* with whom to enter into a relation of sacrificial communion, the other *ukukus* differentiated themselves from the glacier and put themselves into a position of power over it through the claim of being its protector. Protection always takes place from positions of power.

In addition to keeping pilgrims from trespassing onto the glacier, the other group of *ukukus* was also there to uphold a ban that had been established to prevent people from taking ice from the glacier. In response to increasing anxieties about the recession of the glacier, this ban was established in 2004 by the Council of Nations which is an administrative group that helps to manage the organizational logistics of the pilgrimage. This change in the ritual of taking ice from the glacier has received the most amount of attention by the media and is the reason behind sensationalist headlines such as *Peru’s Glaciers Are Melting Away, Along With Ancient Andean Traditions* (Watling 2018 *Newsweek*). There are many problems with media reports such as this.

First, the practice is not that “ancient.” Despite the common perception that the pilgrimage to Quyllurit’i dates back to the Inkans and was subsequently Christianized by the Spanish, there is little evidence to support this. And, even if it did have Inkan roots, I would not exactly say that the Inkans are that “ancient.” Based on his extensive research, Salas Carreño (2006) suggests that the pilgrimage to Quyllurit’i and the practice of climbing to the glacier most likely began only in the 1930s and 40s.

Moreover, much of the media coverage is inaccurate because the practice of taking ice from the glacier is not the most significant part of the performance; it is secondary to the more important task of taking the crosses to and from the glacier (Salas Carreño 2021b). “Ancient Andean Traditions” are not “Melting Away,” and in the likely scenario that the glacier will indeed disappear, I doubt that this will bring an end to the pilgrimage. Instead, I agree with Salas Carreño that in the absence of the ice “thousands of dancers and pilgrims will adapt and

---

11 I write more about the Council of Nations in the next chapter.
restructure their practices in creative ways, as Andean peoples have been doing for millennia in the face of an extremely challenging environment” (2021b: 72).

The idea of protecting the glacier marks a significant change in the ritual practices of the pilgrimage, and I would like to suggest that this discourse on protection is partly due to the influence of environmentalist narratives that stereotypically represent indigenous people as “natural conservationists” (Conklin and Graham 1995). The group of ukukus who wanted to protect the glacier spoke Spanish, not Quechua, and as I came to learn, many of them live in the city of Cusco. In other words, they were “indigenous mestizos” (de la Cadena 2000) who, I argue, were performing their indigeneity in accordance with stereotypical representations of indigenous people as “protectors of nature” and “guardians of the environment.” This is a fundamental shift in the perceptions of and relations to mountains that I have been describing throughout this thesis. Instead of a powerful Apu to whom humans are dependent, an inversion of the hierarchy is taking place in which the Apu is becoming dependent on the human. Within the first set of relations, sacrifice works toward communion with the more powerful, and within the second set, it works toward separation from and transcendence over the less powerful. In other words, the first instance brings things together, and the second sets them back apart. This is the trick of the ukuku.

c. The Past is in Front of You, and the Future is Behind You

In this section, I would like to consider what the Apu’s melting body might reveal about time and the rate at which geological transformation occurs. In the Andean ethnographic literature, there are two Quechua words that are usually translated as “past” and “future.” As de la Cadena explains, “the first is ñawpaq; it derives from ñawi (eyes), with the suffixes pa and q. Literally, it translates as ‘that which is to the eyes’” (2015: 129). Like the bones of the ñawpaq machus that I described in Chapter Two, ñawpaq refers to the past, but since the word refers to something that is observable in front of one’s eyes, there is an overlap with the present. De la Cadena observes, “for being in front of one’s eyes, past and present are not necessarily two distinct temporalities; they can fold into one another and be permanent now and here, always in front of observers while not necessarily co-temporary with them” (ibid.). In Quechua, the past and the present is that which is in front of you. The future, by contrast, is that which is behind you. The Quechua word that is usually translated as “future” is qhipaq. De la Cadena notes, “it means behind and refers to something that is on or at our back, that cannot be seen and is therefore unknown; speakers of Quechua explain its use as ‘after’ (or what comes after)”
In Quechua, the past is in front of you because it is observable with the eyes and is knowable; the future, on the other hand, is behind you because it cannot be seen and remains unknown (see also Cummins 2020).

The idea that the past is in front of you, and the future is behind you tends to go against typically “Western” common-sense assumptions about space and time (cf. Whorf 1956). Usually, the configuration is the other way around: the past is behind you, and the future is in front of you. Oftentimes, clichéd sayings of this sort are charged with a sense of morality, self-improvement, and progress. “Better Days are Ahead.” “Look Back and Learn from Past Mistakes.” “Hope is on the Horizon.” To name just a few.

In an interpretation of a painting by Paul Klee, Walter Benjamin criticizes this sense of directionality and moral progress, of looking and moving forward in time. He writes:

A Klee painting named *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise: it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress (1992 [1968]).
The way in which Benjamin interprets the angel in Klee’s painting as having its face looking toward the past and its back turned toward the future is strikingly consistent with perceptions of time in relation to the body in the Quechua language. Furthermore, just as the angel in Benjamin’s interpretation is a witness to piles of wreckage through time so too in Quechua cosmology is the current world built on cycles of destruction from worlds past, as I described in Chapter Two in my discussion of the ñawpaq machus and pachakutis. To recall, the ñawpaq machus are the human inhabitants of the previous world before the pachakuti (“world reversal”) that was triggered by the Spanish Conquest and defeat of the Inkan Empire. The mummified remains of the ñawpaq machus are sometimes found today.

A popular story that I heard in Pacchanta relates that there is a town nearby where ñawpaq machus used to live, but it was destroyed by a catastrophic flood from long ago, and it is now buried at the bottom of a lake. The name of the lake is Sigrenacocha, and it is located directly across the Interocceanic Highway from the Quyllurití shrine. With the help of some students from the school where I was teaching, I wrote down the story of the town’s destruction, and it goes like this:

One day there was a marriage and an old man came to the party, but the people did not welcome him or want to give him any food because he had snot all over his face. One woman, however, approached the old man, cleaned his face, and gave him some food to eat. The old man then told the woman to leave the party and not to look back. She proceeded to leave, but as she went, she looked back and immediately turned into stone. The town where the wedding was happening was then drowned by a flood of water. Now, that town and its inhabitants are buried at the bottom of the lake, and the woman who transformed into stone sits on its shore.

I could be wrong in my interpretation (if interpretations of stories are ever “wrong,” or just some better than others), but it seems clear enough that the town was destroyed because the people at the wedding party refused to welcome the old man and to give him something to eat. This was a clear moral violation—giving food to visitors continues to be an important moral practice in Pacchanta and many other places, of course, today. But, if cleaning the snot off the old man’s face and giving him something to eat was a morally good act, why was the woman then turned into stone? Is it because she looked back at the town even though she was instructed not to do so? But why was she told not to look back? When she looked back, was she looking into a future that she should not see—the destruction of the town? Or, perhaps I’m
thinking about transformation into stone in too limited of a way. Maybe turning into stone is not some form of punishment for committing an offence but rather the complete opposite? It’s an honour—a way of becoming an ancestor who now sits in a position of permanence and stability in the landscape. I’m not sure. The story leaves me with more questions than answers, but perhaps that’s the sign of a good story.

As the glaciers above the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine continue to retreat farther back and further up the mountain, to what extent are the ruined and devastated remains of the past being revealed? According to Paerregaard (2020) and his interlocutors, one thing that the glacial recession is revealing is not necessarily the bones of the ñawpaq machus but the much more recently deceased bodies of ukukus who have fallen into the crevasses over the decades and died. An ukuku from the Quispicanchis nation recounted to him, “each year between four and five ukukus disappear in the ice. Some also die because the cold deep-freezes them” (2020: 851). And the ukuku continued, “two years ago, the bodies of our disappeared brothers began to appear due to the thawing” (ibid.). In response, the ukukus created a graveyard next to the glacier in which they have buried around one hundred bodies (ibid.). The language of sacrifice is commonly used to interpret the meaning of the death of an ukuku on the glacier (ibid.). As the glacier recedes, the sacrificed bodies of ukukus are being revealed.

Sallnow (1987) recounts similar stories as well about ukukus dying on the glacier and it being interpreted through the lens of sacrifice. He also relates that a “ritual battle” used to take place on the glacier between the Quispicanchis and Paucartambo nations. When the pilgrimage first formed, these were the only two nations represented at the festival. The “ritual battle” was a competition between them to capture the cross that had been erected on the glacier. The victor would then return triumphantly back down to the shrine with the cross. During the course of this battle, which involved playfully and seriously pelting each other with snowballs and chunks of ice, some ukukus are said to have fallen into the crevasses of the glacier. Their deaths were later interpreted as a form of sacrifice.

During the course of my fieldwork, I also heard many stories about ukukus dying on the glacier; however, I was never really sure if I could believe them. I certainly did not see anyone die nor did I see a graveyard, but I also did not go searching for a graveyard, so I don’t know. I had heard rumours about it, but again, with all of the “jokes and burlesque,” “play and performance,” it was hard to distinguish between fact and fantasy, reality and make-believe, which is a theme that I pick back up in Chapter Six. Whether the dead bodies of ukukus really are being revealed as the glacier recedes is an important issue, but even if they are not, it is
nevertheless significant that some people tell these stories because it helps to reveal the ways in which they understand their relationship to the environment through the lens of sacrifice.

Melting glaciers are standard images used in the media to represent climate change and to evoke a sense of catastrophe. In Benjamin’s interpretation of Klee’s painting, perhaps the wreckage and debris left after glacial melt is part of the “single catastrophe” that the angel is “fixedly contemplating” (1992 [1968]). However, unlike Benjamin’s interpretation of Angelus Novus and the Quechua sense that the world is already built on catastrophe such as at Lake Sigrenacocha, contemporary representations of climate change in the media tend to emphasize catastrophe as something that is forthcoming and on the horizon; it is in front of us and in the future. With this sense of fear instilled, messages to reform easily follow. A popular genre of literature called “climate fiction” or “cli-fi” has even recently emerged that illustrates the dystopian worlds that might emerge if environmental disaster is not thwarted. So, which is it? Is catastrophe in front us or behind us? Or both? Is it in the past, or in the future? Or, are we continually living in the midst of catastrophe in the present? On the other hand, why talk of catastrophe at all? Is it really that inevitable of a thing?

In the next section, I would like to dig a little deeper into these questions by leaving the pilgrimage shrine for a moment and taking a trip into the past—to a time and place where questions such as these were being asked in a series of heated debates concerning the rate of environmental change and the role of the human within it. The place is Europe, particularly Scotland and England, and the time is the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the Age of the so-called Enlightenment. I will discuss two key figures, Thomas Burnet and James Hutton, and use them as representatives of two competing theories of the time—Catastrophism and Uniformitarianism. The theory of Catastrophism, which has come to be associated with Burnet, holds that geological formations of the earth such as mountains are the result of sudden and catastrophic events from the past that were triggered by immoral human behaviour such as recounted in the biblical story of Noah’s Flood. In contrast, the theory of Uniformitarianism, which has come to be associated with Hutton, proposes that geological formations of the earth such as mountains are not the result of catastrophic events from the past that were connected to human morality but are rather the result of very slow changes in the Earth’s crust over the course of millions of years before humans even existed. Although each figure cannot be associated with each theory so simplistically, and indeed, there are overlaps between the two theories, I will set up this contrast for the sake of heuristic purposes. After discussing these two competing frameworks, I suggest that they are not buried in the past but serve as a foundation for many of the ways in which climate change is represented in the media today, and in the
conclusion, I return to the edge of the glacier to show how the ukukus reflect a key philosophical dilemma concerning the human relationship to the environment.

d. Catastrophism and Uniformitarianism

In 1671, a thirty-six-year-old theologian named Thomas Burnet left his home in Cambridge, England for a three-year Grand Tour of the European continent. Tours like this were a common practice for the wealthy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and were considered an essential part of an aristocratic education and lifestyle. In addition to all of the art, architecture, and archaeological ruins that Burnet would have seen during his Grand Tour, the Alpine mountains that he saw for the first time made an extraordinary impression on him. Their sharp peaks and irregular forms shocked his aesthetic senses of order, symmetry, and proportion and led him to wonder about the causes of their formation (Barton 2017; Nicolson 1959). Reflecting on his Grand Tour through the mountains, Burnet wrote:

There is nothing doth more awaken our Thoughts, or excite our Minds to enquire into the Causes of such Things, than the actual View of them; as I have had Experience my self [sic], when it was my Fortune to cross the Alps and Apennine Mountains; for the Sight of those wild, vast, and indigested Heaps of Stones and Earth did so deeply stir my Fancy, that I was not easy till I could give my self [sic] some tolerable Account how that Confusion came in Nature (1726: Book I, 190-191 as cited in Nicolson 1959: 207-208).

In 1681, Burnet published his conclusions about the causes of the formation of mountains and the earth as a whole in the book *Telluris Theoria Sacra*. An English translation *Sacred Theory of the Earth* followed three years later. As the subtitle to the book indicates, Burnet’s thinking about the current state of the earth and its origins expanded to include the future state as well; the subtitle ambitiously reads: *Containing an Account of the Original of the Earth and of All the General Changes Which It Hath Already Undergone or Is to Undergo, till the Consummation of All Things*. The claims that Burnet advanced in the book placed him at the heart of heated debates of the time at the intersection of theology and the newly developing discipline of geology. If the Lisbon earthquake in 1755 made a profound impact on Kant’s thinking (Clark 2011), then the sight of mountains did the trick for Burnet.

In *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, Burnet imaginatively proposes that the world is shaped in the form of an egg and that there is a huge ball of fire at its centre. Surrounding the ball of fire is a layer of earth that separates the fire from a third layer, an internal ocean. And finally, on the outside of this ocean, there is one more layer of earth (the land) that makes up the egg’s
outer surface. This outer shell is the crust of the earth on which humans, among many other forms of life, dwell.

Burnet asserted that before the catastrophic effects of the Great Flood as narrated in the biblical book of Genesis, the outer surface of the egg was smooth and continuous land all the way around. He writes, “the shape of the first earth, or the first inhabitable globe was even, uniform, unbroken and without mountains or the gaps of the sea” (1702: Book I, 12 as cited in Barton 2017: 55). However, a constant bombardment of heat from the sun caused the surface of the earth to warm up, dry out, and begin to crack. Simultaneously, the temperature of the water just below the surface of the egg began to rise. When the water heated up, vapour formed which put pressure on the land as the steam tried to escape. With the heat from above and the pressure from below, the egg finally cracked, and the water from inside the egg spilled out in full force. A universal deluge ensued that destroyed everything save Noah and all that was contained within the Ark. Moreover, Burnet proposed that God designed all of these physical processes to unfold and for the egg to crack at the precise moment when humanity’s sins had reached their height. Bringing together both physical and moral principles, this is Burnet’s geo-theological explanation for the cause of the Great Flood.

When the waters of the Flood finally receded, the postdiluvial world that was left behind was broken up, separated into pieces, and cut apart by mountains and seas. Traces of the Flood became written on the surface of the earth in ruins that set one space apart from another. A world that was once “even, uniform, unbroken” became divided into many different pieces. Sameness became difference, unity became plurality, and Burnet, along with many of his contemporaries, found that world quite ugly to look at. Beauty fled when difference and separation appeared. John Donne, an English poet who preceded Burnet by a generation, shared similar sentiments about the appearance of the earth. Commenting on the ugliness and deformed characteristics of this cut-up and broken world, he asked about the mountains and the seas:

Are these but warts and pock-holes in the face  
Of th’ Earth? Thinke so; but yet confesse, in this  
The worlds proportion disfigured is (1929: 204-205 as cited in Nicolson 1959: 76).

Making a connection between the macrocosm of the planet and the microcosm of the human body, the height of the mountains are “warts” on the surface of the skin, and the abysmal depths of the seas, “pock-holes in the face.” Contributing to the ugliness and despair, Galileo magnified the scale even further when he discovered with the telescope that the circular features on the moon are craters; or as Donne might have put it, pock-holes in the face of the
moon. The human body, the earth, the cosmos—all in ruins—broken, beaten, decaying matter, corrupted by human sin and separated from the Creator.

The frontispiece of Burnet’s *Sacred Theory of the Earth* illustrates well the degree of this separation between the current world and its Creator:

![Frontispiece of Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth*](image)

At the top centre of the image, Christ stands both inside and outside creation while the current world that humans inhabit—broken up into pieces—sits at the far bottom centre of the page—farthest away from Christ. Fortunately for Burnet and other Catastrophists, however, this wretched world will one day explode in a huge ball of fire as illustrated in the next sphere of the cycle to the left. When the particles from that blown-apart world settle back down, they will re-form a world of paradise like it existed before the Flood. And, finally, that world will eventually become a star and be reunited with God. While I just described the process of destruction and reunification based on the left side of the image, the process of creation and increasing separation is illustrated on the right. Notice the one sphere directly to the right of Earth—that’s the Flood with Noah’s ark just visible as the dark spot. The one before that is Eden—perfectly smooth all the way around—and the one with Christ’s left foot in it is the beginning of the universe.
In the generation after Burnet, James Hutton (1726-1797), the so-called “father of modern geology,” intervened in the geo-theological discussions of the time by arguing that the earth is not simply in a disastrous state of ruin as a result of human sin and that it will remain this way until eventually blowing up. Rather, Hutton proposed that the earth is a dynamic system that is constantly changing through processes of decay and regeneration and that these processes have been taking place over a period of time that immensely dwarfs the amount of time humans have occupied this planet. By challenging people to think in terms of millions of years instead of only hundreds or thousands, Hutton is considered to be one of early theorists of what today is referred to as “deep time,” a sense of time in which Hutton states, “we find no vestige of a beginning- no prospect of an end” (1788: 304).

Although Hutton is often represented as the “father of modern geology” who overturned the story of creation as recounted in the book of Genesis, this portrayal is a bit misleading as there are many ways in which Hutton’s ideas about the geological formation of the earth were continuous with the theology of his time. First, Hutton did not totally discredit the Genesis account of creation. In defence of his theory, he argued, along with others, that the seven “days” of creation must be interpreted on a much bigger time scale than the typical twenty-four-hour day (Irvine 2020). Sounding a bit cliché today, the idea is that “a day in God’s time is a million years in human time.”

Another way in which theology and geology overlapped for Hutton is his belief in Final Causes; that is, the teleological notion that things have an end for which they were created. For Hutton, the earth was created by divine design for humans to inhabit (ibid.). Yet, this raised a problem for Hutton: if the earth was created for humans to inhabit, then why would it be in state of decay as is evident in processes such as erosion? The solution, Hutton proposed, is that the earth must have ways in which it can regenerate itself. Hutton argued that the world has been in an ongoing process of decay and regeneration for an immensely vast period of time and will continue to be in this process for an unforeseeable future. Although Hutton did not use this term, his theory came to be known as Uniformitarianism in contrast to theories of Catastrophism.

Marine fossils found in mountains were one of the key pieces of evidence for Hutton’s thoughts on the processes of decay and regeneration. Summarizing Hutton’s ideas, Irvine writes:

If there were no system by which the earth could regenerate itself, this decay would lead towards an end point, yet the evidence, as shown by marine fossils found in the limestone of the Alps and Andes (1788: 219-220), is that these mountains consist of ‘materials deposited at the bottom of the sea’ (1788: 220),
subsequently lifted through the actions of subterranean heat (1788: 237) (Irvine 2020: 28).

Decayed matter from the past is the stuff that mountains are made of, and Hutton proposes that heat from the earth’s interior is the engine that drives their generation upward. Mountains rise from the remains of the past only to crumble and become the material for future mountains. If mountains are the ruins of a broken up world as they were for Burnet, then Hutton’s mountains are ruins that are constantly re-building themselves.

Hutton describes the functioning of the earth’s system in a number of different ways. For example, I wrote that heat is the “engine that drives” the generation of mountains because one of the ways in which Hutton describes the earth is as a “beautiful machine” (1788: 215 as cited in Irvine 2020: 28). As noted by many different authors, this characterization of the world as a machine reflects the context of Hutton’s writings during the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and his friendship with James Watt, the developer of the steam engine (Bailey 1949: 367; Irvine 2020: 31; Rudwick 2005: 162). In other instances, however, Hutton describes the world not as a machine but as a body; he writes: “Is this world to be considered thus merely as a machine, to last no longer than its parts retain their present position, their proper forms and qualities? Or may it not be also considered as an organized body?” (1788: 216 as cited in Irvine 2020: 34). Anticipating contemporary ideas about the earth as a living organism, such as Lovelock’s (1979) Gaia hypothesis, Hutton viewed the planet as a whole that is constituted by many interdependent parts. He writes: “Here is a compound system of things, forming together one whole living world: a world maintaining an almost endless diversity of plants and animals, by the disposition of its various parts, and by the circulation of its different kinds of matter” 1795: II, 560 as cited in Irvine 2020: 35). “A beautiful machine,” “an organized body,” “one whole living world;” Hutton’s description and explanation of the world as an integrated system composed of interdependent parts helped set the stage for many of the ways in which the environment and human participation within it is discussed today.

In standard narrations of the history of science, Hutton and the subsequent variations of Uniformitarianism won the prize over biblically-inspired, speculative, and “unscientific” Catastrophists like Burnet (Gould 1987). In other words, “science triumphed over religion” in the great arrow forward through time as Enlightened ideas conquered the religious ideas of the past. However, narratives like this overlook historical complexities and how the categories of religion and science sometimes overlap. For example, Hutton may be considered “religious” in the sense that he believed that the world was created by God for humans to inhabit, and
many of Burnet’s observations of geological processes such as erosion and water vapour pressure may be considered scientific. Rather than trying to separate religion and science, both thinkers were trying to keep them together during an era in which the emerging “modern constitution” was working to set them apart (Latour 1993 [1991]).

Moreover, although Uniformitarianism may have trumped Catastrophic explanations for the earth such as Noah’s Flood, I would like to pause for a moment by asking: to what extent did Catastrophism really go away? Might the ghost of Burnet still be lingering around? While explanations for the current state of the earth that appeal to a universal deluge from the past are scientifically unacceptable today, it seems that the catastrophists’ speculations about future disasters are very much alive and well. In contemporary discourses about climate change and the Anthropocene, catastrophe is all around us as the world is said to be facing its “sixth mass extinction event.” Glaciers are melting, forest fires are raging, sea levels are rising. For many, the apocalypse appears to be approaching. Commenting on the relation between Catastrophism and the Anthropocene, Jon Bialecki writes:

The apocalyptic anxieties that almost always arrive with the idea of the Anthropocene suggests that Hutton’s claim that there is ‘no beginning’, may hold up much better than his presumption of there being ‘no prospect for an end’. Indeed, Hutton’s Uniformitarianism, set up in opposition to biblically dependent diluvian accounts of geological formation, may have blinded us to Catastrophism-leaning arguments regarding terrestrial or cosmic forces that could interrupt the Anthropocene—or which the Anthropocene may unknowingly unleash (Clark, Stasch, & Bialecki 2018: 100).

So, maybe Burnet was right, at least, about the future: are we about to blow up?!? Or perhaps crack like an egg and release another Flood?

e. Conclusion

Anxieties about a possible climate apocalypse bring me back to the edge of the melting glacier at the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine. To recall: for the *ukukus* with the cross, the aim was to establish contiguity with the glacier—to become in communion with the more powerful *Apu* through the labour of sacrifice. The movement was from the below to the above and the above to the below. It is a work of synthesis—of bringing separate things together. The *ukukus* who we met already at the glacier, however, worked the other way around. “No!,” they said, “Nobody is to trespass onto the ice!” They even blew their whistles at us. The emphasis here is on separation—to keep things apart and to maintain distinctions. While in the first instance, the move is toward unification, in the second, it is toward differentiation.
Debates between Catastrophists and Uniformitarians follow a similar logic. For Catastrophists like Burnet, the current world is cut-up and broken into many different pieces, and, for him, and many others of the time such as Donne, this is a terrible situation because it is a Fall from the original unity which God designed. Following Scott’s (2000) mono- vs. poly-ontological framework, the aim then is to put the pieces back together again, kind of like “All the King’s horses and all the King’s men” who worked to put Humpty Dumpty back together again—as it goes in the English nursery rhyme from the same time period. The original state of unity was destroyed, and now it needs to be restored. However, it is worth emphasising that “All the King’s horses and all the King’s men/Couldn’t put Humpty back together again.” The work of unification, in other words, is never complete. It is an ongoing process that requires much struggle and effort. Similarly with the sacrificial work of the ukukus, they must return every year to the Apu in order to put the pieces back together again. Indeed, the same is the case for all of the pilgrims travelling with their demandas (“icons”) to the shrine. In a “cut-up and broken world,” much labour is required to stitch it together.

For the Uniformitarians, however, like Hutton, everything is already stitched together into a single “organized body” (1788: 216 as cited in Irvine 2020: 34). It is “one whole living world” of which humans are an infinitesimal part (1795: II, 560 as cited in Irvine 2020: 35). If this is the case, then, again, following Scott’s (2000) proposal, the work is toward differentiation and distinction. Humans need to assert their difference and to create separations between things. The group of ukukus standing at the edge of the glacier and refusing access onto it is an example—the work here is on boundary-making and maintaining difference. It is about drawing a line and not crossing it; or, again, as Knut Rio articulated about sacrifice, maintaining the “tenuous separateness of realms” (2014: 337-338).

The ukuku is a mediating figure that is caught in-between different sides—both human and animal, male and female, insider and outsider, alive and dead. However, as I argued in this chapter, through their comical and fearful performances, ukuku paradoxically end up reasserting and reinstating the very categories that they bring together by showing that this is not the “normal” order of things. Ukuku simultaneously bring things together and set them apart—this is the work of sacrifice, and again, the trick of the ukuku.

In contemporary concerns about climate change, a key philosophical issue that underpins many debates is the degree to which humans are a part of the environment or separate from it. The conflict between the ukukus at the edge of the glacier reflects this tension. The move onto the ice demonstrates a desire for an intimate relation between humans and the
environment. There is a sense of merger, communion, and non-separation, or again, as Hutton said, “one whole living word,” a single “organised body.” The protest not to move onto the glacier and touch the ice, on the other hand, signals a separation from and difference between humans and the environment. In this situation, humans become “protectors” of the environment from a more powerful position rather than being subsumed by and incorporated into a more powerful other. So, which is it? Are we a part of the environment, or separate from it? Immanent with or transcendent to? Furthermore, is climate catastrophe an inevitable fate? Are we doomed to be destroyed by geo-cosmic forces much bigger than ourselves, or is it something that we can control and prevent? I don’t know. Perhaps the key to the dilemma is somewhere in the middle, like the ukuku—in the in-between—standing at the edge of the glacier with one foot on rock and the other on melting ice.
Chapter 5: Runakuna, the Ukuku Mayor, and Carnaval

a. Runakuna

In the Quechua language, Runa means “person” and -kuna is used to make a noun into plural form, so Runakuna means “persons.” Knowing very little Quechua at the start of my fieldwork, I learned this on Day One of my language class in Cusco before moving to the village of Pacchanta. But, what may seem to be a straightforward translation is actually quite complicated. What it means to be a person, of course, is not so easy to define. Who is included and what is excluded from that category is a contentious issue of debate.

Before fieldwork, I had already come across the term Runakuna in the ethnographic literature of the region, and I was under the impression that Runakuna was the name for the Quechua-speaking people with whom I was going to live and work. So, when my language teacher told me that Runa means “person,” I was confused. “I thought it means ‘Quechua person,’” I said to my teacher, and she responded, “Yes, it means ‘Quechua person,’ and it also just means ‘person.’” And, I thought to myself, and continue to think, “How can one word be as general as the term ‘person’ and as particular as the term ‘Quechua person’ at the same time? If I’m a non-Quechua speaker, does that make me not a person? Are the only real persons, Quechua speakers?”

At first glance, I thought that the term Runakuna was a bit ethnocentric—one group of people calling themselves persons which would leave everyone outside of that group to be not persons. Viveiros de Castro (1998) observes that this form of self-referral is common throughout the “indigenous” Americas: the wari’ of the Brazilian Amazon, the dene of Northwest North America, and the masa of the Peruvian Amazon, for example, all similarly call themselves “people.” But rather than being ethnocentric designations, Viveiros de Castro argues that terms such as these are cosmocentric. The category of “people” does not simply refer to a particular group of human beings; rather, it indicates the point of view of any subject, human or nonhuman. He writes, “terms such as wari’ (Vilaça 1992), dene (McDonnell 1984), or masa (Århem 1993) mean ‘people’, but they can be used for—and therefore used by—very different classes of beings: used by humans they denote human beings; but used by peccaries, howler monkeys or beavers they self-refer to peccaries, howler monkeys or beavers” (1998:...
This understanding of personhood is not ethnocentrically closed; rather, it is cosmocentrically open.\textsuperscript{12}

In explaining the term \textit{Runa}, de la Cadena (2014) follows Viveiros de Castro’s line of thinking. She writes, “Using Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s idea that Amerindians’ words for self-designation do not denote human species but rather the position of the subject, I offer that when \textit{runa} defines the position of the subject, this subject is not only human” (2014: 256). \textit{Runakuna}, then, is not only a term for a particular group of human persons but a term that includes nonhuman persons as well such as mountains who see themselves in the same way that humans see themselves; that is, as humans. According to this logic, Mount Ausangate, for example, from his own (human) perspective, is a \textit{Runa} too.

While I appreciate the discussions of Amerindian perspectivism, and I find myself in agreement with many of its points as applied to the Andes, I sometimes find the debates a bit removed from first-hand ethnographic experience. While Ausangate, for example, might be a \textit{Runa} from a theoretical point of view because he is a subject who has a perspective and enters into exchange relations with other humans, I think that it is important to remember that this is a secondary analytical construction on the part of the anthropologist. From the point of view of human \textit{Runa}, Ausangate is not a \textit{Runa}. Rather, he is an \textit{Apu}, the \textit{jefe} (“the chief,” “the boss”), as my interlocutors described to me, who sits in a hierarchically superior position to \textit{Runa}. For this reason, \textit{Apus} like Ausangate share more in common with \textit{Mistikuna} (“mestizos”) and other more powerful “outsiders” than with \textit{Runakuna} “insiders” (Gose 2018 a).

In this chapter, I would like to explore the meaning of the term \textit{Runakuna} and how it sits in relation to other human and nonhuman categories of identification. In the first part of the chapter, I will consider \textit{Runakuna} in relation to the human categories of indigenous, \textit{campesino}, and mestizo, and in the last part, I will discuss \textit{Runakuna} in relation to the nonhuman categories of \textit{paqochakuna} ("alpacas") and \textit{tirakuna} ("earth-beings"). I will show how these many different categories are not fixed and closed but rather open and fluid. Belonging to a particular category and being \(x\) is not a pre-determined essential condition. Instead, one’s position is the result of specific types of practices and sets of relations with others, and as practices and relations change, so too does one’s status as a particular type of person.

b. Categories of Identification

\textsuperscript{12}I elaborate more on Amerindian perspectivism in Chapter Two.
In the course of trying to understand the complexity of the word Runa with my language teacher in Cusco, I mentioned the Spanish word indígena (“indigenous person”) as instruction of Quechua was taking place in Spanish. But, my teacher quickly corrected me and told me that I should not use the word indígena, and when I asked, “Why?,” I was told, “because it’s not polite.” And I learned that an even more offensive term is indio (“indian”). Instead of indígena, I was informed that I should call Quechua-speaking people Runakuna. Another acceptable term, I was told, is campesino, the Spanish term for “peasant farmer,” and that campesino is the official legal designation that the Peruvian government uses to refer to its Quechua-speaking citizens as well as any other “poor farmer” who lives in the countryside. In the past, the government used the term indígena to refer to Runakuna but in 1970, the government changed the term to campesino in an effort to emphasize the economic rather than racial or ethnic dimension of Runakuna life.

After a couple of months of language classes in Cusco, I moved to el campo “the countryside” to immerse myself as much as possible in the daily life of a Runa/campesino. While people in Pacchanta prefer to call themselves Runakuna, the term campesino is used sometimes as well. But, as this is a fairly recent term that has been introduced by the Peruvian state, learning that “you are a campesino” requires a bit of instruction. While hanging around the house one day with my host family, I was struck by an instance in which this happened. Vilma, the eleven-year-old daughter of the family with whom I was living, was looking at a photograph of a campesino, and she said with sympathy, “O pobre campesino” (“O poor peasant farmer”), and Lucio, her father, laughed and said, “¡Tú eres un pobre campesino!” (“You are a poor peasant farmer!”). Vilma looked up from the photograph, looking a bit confused, and nervously giggled. She wouldn’t know that she is a pobre campesino (or campesina as female) unless people like her father, the government, and her schoolteachers told her so. Otherwise, she is a Runa. But, I guess that people have to be taught that they are Runa as well.

As Vilma gets older, I will be curious to see whether or not she chooses to remain a Runa/campesina. In one sense, she will always be a Runa just like any other subject with a point of view is a Runa. On the other hand, this is a term that has come to be associated with a particular group of people and one’s belonging to that category is determined by a variety of practices and relations such as the language one speaks, the place where one lives, and the labour one performs. Vilma may be able to distance herself from the category of Runa in the future by leaving Pacchanta and moving to the city. She is already perfectly bilingual in Quechua and Spanish, so by moving to the city, speaking Spanish, and not dressing in the
pollera skirt that is typical for Quechua women to wear, she can change her identity from Runa to Misti (the Quechua term for mestizo). The degree to which she would be accepted as mestiza, however, would be open to debate by the people surrounding her and judging her based on criteria such as fluency in Spanish, level of education, and type of work in which she is engaged. Many Runa who become mestizo are left trapped in an “in-between” state based on the judgements of others: they are not quite Runa because they speak Spanish and do not live in the countryside, and they are not quite mestizo because they can also speak Quechua and originate from outside the city.

This fluidity of identity in the context of urban migration has been commented on by many ethnographers in South America. For example, Course (2013b) describes a similar dynamic among the Mapuche in Chile. He shows how Mapuche migrants to the city “quite literally, become white” through certain practices and new sets of relations (2013: 788-789). He writes:

They [urban migrants] are spread throughout the city rather than in specific districts, they frequently marry white people, and work in their homes. They no longer speak Mapudungun, their trips to their natal communities in the south become less and less frequent, and perhaps most tellingly, they no longer refer to themselves as Mapuche but rather as sureños, ‘southerners’” (2013b: 789).

Referring to the work of Ewart (2007), Course (2013b) describes a similar process among the Panará of central Brazil; he writes, “the Panará of central Brazil dress and act as whites when entering white society, but once back in their villages they reverse this transformation by reverting to Panará ways” (2013b: 787). Another example is “the young Yanesha woman described by Santos Granero [who] becomes white upon moving to the city, and then returns to being Yanesha after a few months back in her natal community (2009)” (Course 2013b: 787). As described by many ethnographers, identities are fluid and transformational; they are the result of particular sets of practices and relations; they are not static essences.

Even though Vilma may be able to change her identity in the future, at this point, she does not want to and her parents think that she might stay in Pacchanta. When I asked Vilma if she enjoyed helping out on the farm in herding alpacas, harvesting potatoes, and a myriad of other tasks, she would typically give me an enthusiastic yes! And, it was quite apparent to me in the way that she often skipped around laughing and playing with the dogs and the ducks. It seemed to me a pretty happy and rich childhood. But, she is still very young and her mind might change. From somewhere, possibly from school or the radio, she is already learning to feel sorry for “the poor campesino;” she just didn’t realize that she was one, until she was taught so by her father, who in turn, was informed so by the Peruvian state.
While people in Pacchanta refer to themselves as both Runakuna and campesino, I never heard the term indígena used. None of my interlocutors would have called him or herself an “indígena,” an “indigenous person,” even though they may be characterized as such by others, such as me on the first day of my Quechua language class. Unlike Bolivia, Ecuador, the Peruvian Amazon, and many other places throughout Latin America, the claim to an indigenous identity has not been strongly emphasized in the Peruvian Andes (Degregori 1993; García and Lucero 2004; Huarcaya 2015; Pajuelo 2006; Salas Carreño 2020, 2021). As illustrated by my language teacher who told me not to use the term indígena because “it’s not polite,” being an indígena, or even worse, an indio, (an “indian”) has generally been considered in this region of the Andes as something to hide, to downplay, and to be ashamed of, not something to put on display or to celebrate.

However, this absence of claims to indigeneity in the Peruvian Andes appears to be shifting (Rousseau and Hudon 2017), and Salas Carreño (2020, 2021a) observes how appeals to indigeneity for the sake of advancing certain political interests are beginning to grow in the Cusco region in a movement that he calls “the indigenization of politics.” He (2021a) details a case in which representatives from the two governing bodies that organize the Quyllurití pilgrimage each year have recently presented themselves as “naciones originarias (first nations)” and “pueblos indígenas (indigenous peoples)” to an institution of the Peruvian state in order to protest the appropriation of one of their “indigenous symbols” by a mestizo political party in Cusco. The “indigenous symbol” that has been appropriated by the party and used repeatedly in its campaign material is the image of the ukuku. In the next section, I would like use Salas Carreño’s discussion of the contestation over the image of the ukuku in order to continue exploring how people move in and out of categories of belonging and identification—categories that are continually transforming themselves as well.

c. The Ukuku Candidate for Mayor

The Quyllurití pilgrimage that I have been describing in the previous two chapters is commonly perceived to be both a Catholic and an indigenous festival. As the largest pilgrimage in the Andes, it attracts the loyalty and faith of tens of thousands of people. In an effort to appeal to the hearts, minds, and ultimately votes of these devotees, a political party in Cusco began using the image of the ukuku in its campaign material leading up to the 2010 mayoral election. The faithful of Quyllurití tend to represent a coveted “indigenous vote” which has only recently been made important given increased mobility from rural to urban environments.
and the instatement of “universal suffrage” in 1979 (Salas Carreño 2021a). In an effort to appeal to this constituency, a political party named Movimiento Fuerza Cusco (Cusco Force Movement) began using the image of the *ukuku* as the official symbol for its party, and it cast its candidate for mayor dressed as an *ukuku* in a campaign video.

In the video, Carlos Moscoso, the mayoral candidate, stands on a hill in Cusco, with a view behind him that faces the direction of the Quyllurit’i shrine. Although Quyllurit’i himself is not visible (since he is a relatively small boulder housed inside a church as I described in Chapter Three), Mount Ausangate, Quyllurit’i’s hierarchically encompassing superior, is visible from Cusco. However, on this particular day, Ausangate was hidden from view, cloaked behind a veil of clouds. During the time of my fieldwork, people from Pacchanta joked with me on several occasions, saying, “When Runakuna are around, Ausangate shows his face, but when non-Runakuna approach, Ausangate covers up and hides behind the clouds.” I guess on this day, Ausangate’s judgement was cast on Moscoso as non-Runakuna despite the attempt that he makes in the campaign video to transform himself into an “indigenous” *ukuku*.

In the video, as Moscoso stands majestically in front of the concealed mountain, he proclaims in Spanish, “The time has come to decide between the past with all its mistakes and the future with all its hopes” (Salas Carreño 2021a: 333). He then dramatically takes off his glasses like Clark Kent about to transform into Superman, and he puts on the mask of the *ukuku*. At this point, sparks of electricity run through his body and he is transformed into the body of a shaggy-tunic-wearing *ukuku*. Interestingly, his pledge to move “forward in time” involves changing his body into the body of an animal (whether a bear or an alpaca) and identifying himself with what is perceived to be an index of indigeneity in the region. The party’s idea of progress into the future is depicted as a return to an animal past and as an indigenization of the present drawing on racist and social evolutionist associations between animality and indigeneity.

In the video, a young boy in the audience then steps forward and dons the mask of the *ukuku* followed by a teenage woman and man. In the pilgrimage itself, the *ukuku* role is reserved for males only, many of whom are adolescents and for whom the role functions as a rite of passage to mark the transition from boyhood to manhood (Allen 1983). This campaign video, however, includes women as *ukukus* as well, possibly in an attempt to appeal to fifty percent more of the vote. After the young boy and two teenagers don the *ukuku* mask, the rest of the audience, composed of women and men of different ages, follows suit as Moscoso announces, “We can do it together. Yes we can,” a collective ‘we’ that may be interpreted to include the two nonhuman beings that stand in the far distance behind Moscoso: Apu
Ausangate and Lord Quyllurit’i (Salas Carreño 2021a: 333). An image of the mayoral candidate dressed as an *ukuku* and standing in front of the two most powerful metapersons in the Cusco region is a spectacular performance of power akin to calling oneself a prophet of God, or even God Him or Herself, in order to ground and legitimate one’s authority and position. Unfortunately for the party, however, it was not quite enough. Moscoco finished in second place—winning only 13% of the vote. (ibid.).

Leading up to the 2014 elections, Moscoso and his party, re-named Kausachun Cusco (a Quechua-Spanish hybrid slogan that means “Long Live Cusco”) was at it again, and it is here that the organizers of the pilgrimage ramped up their protest and committed themselves to prohibiting the use of the *ukuku* image as the official symbol for the Kausachun party. One posting on social media from the Quispicanchis “first nation” states the objection well: “the *ukuko, pablo, paulito, pablucha* is the guardian soldier of our Lord Quyllurit’i, and as such we ask that this personage be respected, and under no circumstance will we permit so much as the slightest equation with politicians who are a pack of liars, demagogues, and exploiters” (as cited by Salas Carreño 2021a: 336). Although the organizers of the pilgrimage claimed that they did not want to get involved in politics, it was precisely this claim to abstention from politics that gave them political weight in voicing their objection (ibid.). In a different context emerging from his work in Sri Lanka, Jonathan Spencer calls claims to authority like this “tactical secularisation;” he describes it as “the self-conscious invocation of religious boundaries as a kind of protection against the corrosive effects of the political” (2015: 170). By placing themselves on a higher moral ground over the “politicians who are a pack of liars, demagogues, and exploiters,” the organizers of the pilgrimage added greater authority and force to their political intervention.

In addition to voicing their objection through social media, dancers from all of the eight nations staged a protest march in which they converged on the central square of Cusco from different starting points around the outskirts of the city (Salas Carreño 2021a). It seems to me that this particular choreographic structure composed of long lines of dancers converging at a centre replicates the same pattern that is used in the pilgrimage itself when the *ukukus* descend in long lines from eight different points on the glacier and converge at the Quyllurit’i rock shrine sanctuary as I described in Chapter Three. I would like to suggest that these convergences are examples of a Quechua philosophical idea called *tinku* which “in its most general sense, […] refers to any encounter of opposing yet complementary forces.” (Allen 2002

---

13 **Watch here on Youtube the mayoral candidate transform into an ukuku**
The place where two streams intersect, for example, and create one larger river is a *tinku*. Likewise, the ritual battle that the *ukukus* perform in which two dancers pair off and lash at each other’s feet and legs with whips, is a *tinku*. Like other ritual battles fought during the season of *Carnaval*, the violence of the battle and the blood that is sometimes shed is perceived to be generative and productive (Poole 1990; Allen 2002 [1988]). The long lines of *ukukus* from eight different “nations” converging at Cusco’s central plaza from eight different points around the city is a *tinku* that is designed to be productive and generative as well in its attempt to prohibit the appropriation of their identity. The convergence is a powerful concentration of *animu*.

However, a *tinku* on the streets of Cusco and protests on social media carry no legal weight, so with the help of a Lima-based NGO, the organizers of the pilgrimage filed an official objection with the National Election Board over the use of their image by the Kausachun party. It is within this legal document presented to the National Election Board that the organizers of the pilgrimage made an official claim to their “indigenous identity” for the first time in stating:

> We, the undersigned, represent the Council of Pilgrim Nations of Lord Quyllurit’i, the brethren guards of the Brotherhood and the Dancers of Lord Quyllurit’i, hailing from the naciones of Paucartambo, Quispicanchis, Canchis, Acomayo, Paruro, Urubamba, Anta, and Tahuantinsuyo; and constitute naciones originarias [first nations] or pueblos indígenas [indigenous peoples]. We are descendants of peoples who inhabited the southern Andean region of Tawantinsuyo, which has existed since before the Conquest, Colonization, and establishment of the current Peruvian State (Salas Carreño 2021a: 342).

As Salas Carreño observes, this is the first time that the organizers of the pilgrimage have identified themselves as “indigenous.” With the help and advice of the Lima-based NGO, the organization “became indigenous” in order to ground their objection and legitimize their claim.

This is an ironic development because the institution that organizes the pilgrimage was originally founded in 1940 by townspeople and city-dwellers who “typically self-identified as *mestizos*” (Salas Carreño 2021a: 330). Their mission was “to bring to order the *indios* who go up there [to the shrine] to dance and carry out drunken excesses” (Flores Lizana 1997: 26 as cited in Salas Carreño 2021a: 330). For many decades, the Brotherhood that managed the pilgrimage understood itself to be a mestizo organization set apart from and hierarchically superior to the majority of “indigenous” dancers. However, given widespread financial corruption in the Brotherhood and an increase in the number of pilgrim-dancers from urban areas, there arose a movement in the 1990s to radically reorganize the administration. This resulted, among other things, in the requirement that members of the Brotherhood be dancers themselves which “was an open challenge to the foundational purpose of the Brotherhood: to
control the dancers characterized as drunken indios” (Salas Carreño 2021a: 331). Since dancing is seen as a marker of “indigenous identity” in the region, the requirement that members of the Brotherhood be dancers or former dancers was one of the early steps in which the Brotherhood started to “become indigenous” and leave its former mestizo identity behind. Again, the kind of person that a person is, is not a static essence but a condition that emerges as the result of a variety of practices; in this case, the practice of dancing at the shrine. Just as an “indigenous person” can become “mestizo” by moving to the city and speaking Spanish, apparently, a “mestizo person” can become “indigenous” by dancing. At least, according to one of the perceived indexes of indigeneity in the region that frames peoples’ perceptions of what that category means.14

The “indigenization” of the Brotherhood also resulted in the creation of a new governing body called the Council of Nations which sits alongside the Brotherhood in the administrative governance of the pilgrimage. The Council of Nations is composed of eight leaders all of whom are ukukus and are elected as such by their nations at the foot of the glacier each year. It is these two governing bodies that officially filed a petition to protest the use of the ukuku image by the Kausachun party and made an appeal to their “indigenous identity” to legitimate their claim. In response to the objection filed by the Council and the Brotherhood, the Kausachun party stopped using the ukuku as its official party symbol. However, not much really changed: the party then simply switched its symbol to another stereotypical index of indigeneity in the region: a chullo, a type of hat widely associated with Runakuna life. In 2014, having shed the ukuku mask and put on the chullo, Moscoso won the election and governed Cusco for the next four years.15

In a sense, by associating itself with indexes of indigeneity such as the ukuku and the chullo, the Kausachun party may be said to have “become indigenous” even if it did so only in order to gain a percentage of the vote. But then, if not for political leverage (for whatever purposes), why else would a person choose to “be/come indigenous?” This is a category that is still “not polite to say” according to some people like my language teacher, and it is an identity that is generally looked down upon and discriminated against in Cusco. Only recently has “being indigenous” begun to become something to be proud of and to make public. But did Moscoco and his party really “become indigenous?” Does one become indigenous just by putting on a particular mask or a specific hat that is associated with indigeneity? Clearly Mount

---

14 Andrew Canessa (2007) describes similar dynamics regarding the movement between the categories of indigenous and mestizo in the context of the presidential election of Evo Morales in Bolivia.
15 Watch here on Youtube a campaign video in which the party switches its symbol from the ukuku to the chullo.
Ausangate was not convinced when he concealed himself behind the clouds on the day that Moscoso made his campaign video. And the organizers of the pilgrimage were not convinced either, basically calling Moscoso out to be a fraud and not a real *ukuku* nor devotee of El Señor de Quyllurit‘i. How does a person or a party “be/come indigenous” and who gets to decide the “authenticity” of that claim?

Many of the issues and questions about indigeneity that I am raising have received a significant amount of attention in the anthropological literature. Adam Kuper set off a particularly stormy controversy when he published a strong critique of the idea of indigeneity in a 2003 article published in *Current Anthropology*. Kuper argues that “indigenous people” is an essentialist category that relies “on obsolete anthropological notions and on a romantic and false ethnographic vision” (2003: 395). He claims that indigeneity is a new word for “primitive” and that anthropologists should abandon its use. He strongly opposes special land rights based on being indigenous and argues that putting one group of people into a privileged position over others only fuels “local ethnic frictions” (ibid.).

Kuper’s proposals generated a number of heated responses. Ramos (2003), for example, points out that it is quite unfair to blame marginalized groups of people for adopting and using a category that has been assigned to them in incredibly unequal settings. Kenrick and Lewis (2004), furthermore, argue that indigeneity can be a politically useful term for historically marginalized populations, and it has nothing to do with privileged positions. They write, “there is no reason to assume that all people claiming indigenous status are seeking a privileged position. Rather, the majority are seeking equal rights based on an acceptance of the legitimacy of the economic and social basis of their ways of life. They are seeking equal rights through reversing their continuing history of dispossession” (2004: 9). According to Kenrick and Lewis, indigenous rights is not about seeking special and privileged status; it is about redressing injustices of the past and gaining equal status in the present.

Alan Barnard (2006) intervened in these debates with a bit of a compromise. He agrees with Kuper that “we do not need to have, and should not have, this phrase ‘indigenous peoples’ in our glossary of technical terms,” because it is an essentialist category; however, along the lines of Kenrick and Lewis, he writes, “but we can still battle alongside those who call themselves ‘indigenous’” (2006:12). In other words, although “indigenous people” is an essentializing category, it can be politically and legally useful. He writes, “‘indigenous peoples’ are figments of the imagination. But figments of the imagination are real too” (2006: 10). Along with Barnard, I agree that there can be no universal definition of who or what an indigenous person is; “there is no essence that unites Pygmies, Massai, Hopi, and Navaho
(Navajo), no clear definition that unites them and excludes the English” (2006: 9). Yet, depending on the particular context, indigeneity may, in certain cases, be politically and legally helpful for marginalized groups of people “according to local requirements for the achievement of legitimate political goals” (ibid.).

So, was the use of the images of the *ukuku* and the *chullo* as indexes of indigeneity in order to win the election a “legitimate political goal?” Well, it seems to have certainly helped Moscoso achieve the position of mayor, but based on the perspectives of the *ukukus* themselves, it was not a legitimate use according to their “local requirements” of who an *ukuku* is. But, what about the *ukukus* themselves who only recently began calling themselves “indigenous” with the help of an NGO in Lima? As I explained, the governing body to which they belong originally identified itself as a mestizo organization when it was founded.

I do not think it is my role nor position to cast a judgment and provide an answer to the questions that I am raising. In this chapter, I am simply pointing out the fluidity of categories of being and belonging—how people can move in and out of categories based on certain sets of practices and relations, and as practices and relations change, so too do the categories themselves. In the second half of this chapter, I would like to illustrate a few more examples of this movement between categories of belonging through the story of Lucio’s brother, Graciano, a former mayor of Ocongate and Quispicanchis, who returns to Pacchanta every year to celebrate, among other things, *Carnaval*. As I will show, Graciano regularly moves in and out of *Runa* and *Misti* life, and during *Carnaval*, this movement between categories extends to the nonhuman world as well when alpacas and mountains celebrate alongside humans.

d. Graciano Visits Home

At six-o’clock in the morning, I woke up to the sound of Lucio and his teenage son Sandro fiddling around with something outside the house. After a few minutes of listening to their conversation as I lay in bed with still blurry eyes, I realized that they were setting up a loudspeaker like they had previously done for New Year’s Day on the first of January. This day, a couple months later, it was time for another celebration: ¡*Carnaval*! Once they set up the speaker, they immediately turned on the *huayno* music full blast for all of Pacchanta to hear. There was no rolling over and going back to sleep now; it was time to party.

When I asked Lucio why he plays the music so loud on occasions like this, he told me that the music advertises to others that they are *festejando* (“partying”) and that it is an invitation for others to come and join. He told me that when he was younger, he and his friends
would walk around listening for music to know where to go for a good time. In this thesis, I have been emphasizing the importance of sight and sightlines in guiding peoples’ movements through the landscape. My descriptions have been heavily visiocentric, a bit like Tilley’s (1994) in *Phenomenology of the Landscape*. Through the detail of the loudspeaker and the music, however, I have come to understand that the ears and hearing play a significant role as well in navigating one’s way from place to place.

Around seven o’clock in the morning, with a cup of instant coffee in my hand, I walked up to *El Mirador*, the place that I described in Chapter Two which provides a commanding view up and down the valley. As I looked down the valley toward Pacchanta and the road leading out to Tinki, I could see a short line of people walking on the trail leading in to the farm, toward the source of the music. When I asked Lucio who it was walking this way, he told me that it is his brother and his brother’s family. As I watched them walk toward us to the sound of the music blasting from the loudspeaker above my head, it reminded me of the sight and the sound of pilgrims walking on the trail to the shrine at Quyllurit’i. Music is a constant presence all day and all night during the festival which led Sallnow to comment, “the pilgrimage, in a sense, is not so much walked as danced” (1987: 201). Similarly, as Lucio’s brother and his family walked along the trail to the sound of the music, they appeared to be not so much walking as dancing to celebrate yet another festival, simply at a smaller scale.

Unlike Lucio who has lived in Pacchanta all of his life, his older brother, Graciano, left Pacchanta to live, study, and work in the progressively bigger centres of Ocongate, Urcos, and Cusco, and as he moved down in elevation, he moved up in socio-economic status. De la Cadena refers to processes in Peru such as this as a “racialization of geography” in which people are “ranked according to their surroundings: the higher the geographical elevation, the lower the social status of its inhabitants” (2000: 21). In this movement, one’s level of education plays a significant part as well. Whereas Lucio stayed in Pacchanta and went to school for a couple of years between the ages of seven and nine, his older brother completed primary and secondary school and went on to university where he earned a degree in animal husbandry.

As Graciano lived, studied, and worked outside of Pacchanta, he lost his rights as a *comunero* (“commoner”) of Pacchanta, which among other things, gave him access to a plot of land granted by the *ayllu*; yet, he nevertheless maintained ties with his kin in Pacchanta and would return periodically to visit. Given Graciano’s formal education outside of Pacchanta and his continued relations with the *ayllu*, in 2008, he was selected by the *rondas campesinas* to run for mayor of Ocongate in order to represent the interests of the *Runakuna*. Before continuing with the celebration of *Carnaval* on the farm, I would like to take a moment to
explain the rondas campesinas and Graciano’s position as mayor because it will help shed light on relations between Runakuna and Mistikuna and Graciano’s place in-between these separate yet “partially connected” worlds (de la Cadena 2015).

e. Rondas Campesinas and a Runa-Misti Mayor

*Ronda* is a Spanish word that can be variously translated as “round,” “patrol,” or “watch,” and campesina (not campesino so as to match the gendering of ronda), as I explained earlier, refers to a “peasant farmer,” so rondas campesinas literally means, “peasants’ round,” “patrol,” or “watch.” Rondas campesinas are local groups of farmers common throughout Peru who, as de la Cadena explains, “are controversial social institutions nationally known for their self-appointed task of controlling local abuses, both big and small—ranging from marital infidelity to cattle stealing and state corruption” (2015: 251). In one sense, they can be understood as “local police” or “local judicial systems” that take shape in places where the state is absent but that is not entirely accurate because oftentimes the rondas form precisely to protect themselves against the presence of the state (de la Cadena 2015).

The rondas began in the 1970s in the northern coast and highlands of Peru and quickly spread throughout the country (de la Cadena 2015; Degregori et. al. 1996; Rojas 1990; Starn 1999; Yrigoyen Fajardo 2002). By the early 1990s, through the collaboration of local Jesuit priests, NGOs, and regional peasant organizations, the ronda in the district of Ocongate, where Pacchanta is located, began to organise (de la Cadena 2015). In 2003, different rondas throughout Peru played a significant role in defeating the Shining Path which helped lead to their “official recognition” as a legitimate social institution by Peruvian lawyers and politicians (de la Cadena 2015: 251-252). Although “officially recognized,” they nevertheless exist in tense relations with the state. When I attended a ronda during the time of my fieldwork, two Peruvian police officers dressed in uniform were in attendance as manifestations of the state’s presence, yet ironically, the main item on the agenda was a complaint against practices that involved the state. The following is a brief summary of the episode.

An elderly campesino from a rural community was said to have died of “natural causes” and his family members wanted to bury him immediately, but state health care workers and the police insisted that the body of the man be taken to the clinic in Urcos for an autopsy in order to determine the exact cause of death. There were many reasons why the family members did not want the body to be sent to Urcos and why many others agreed that it was not necessary and indeed an injustice. First, the town of Urcos, which is the capital of the province of
Quispicanchis, is located several hours away by car, so the cost of transporting the body is quite high. Another reason is a general understanding in the Andes that dead bodies should be buried as quickly as possible. A third probable reason, though this was not stated explicitly, is a sense of mistrust and suspicion of health care clinics especially concerning the handling of dead bodies. As Allen (2002 [1988]) describes for an Andean aylut located not too far away from Pacchanta, health care workers are sometimes associated with fat-stealing monsters called ñakaqs that I described in Chapter One. The autopsies that the health care workers perform are one of the ways in which ñakaqs extract fat from Runakuna bodies. For these reasons and more, the family and other members of the ronda were outraged that the body was required to be sent to Urcos for an autopsy, so they gathered to demand an official apology from the clinic and compensation for the expenses, time, and stress that was involved in the ordeal.

The following is a photograph of the one ronda that I attended during the time of my fieldwork. As the environment felt quite tense, and I did not feel very comfortable in it, I refrained from moving around a lot and snapping photographs, so this is the only image that I took:

![Photograph of a ronda](image)

The photo illustrates the significance of the word rondas campesinas in many senses of the term. The many campesinas are gathered “in-the-round” with everyone’s “watch” and “patrol” directed in toward the events happening at the centre. This stands in an inverse relation to the structure of a panopticon in which the one guard at the centre looks out toward the many
Although it is a bit difficult to see, what is happening at the centre in this photo is something different from the episode that I just described. Here, a woman who recently moved into an ayllu from a different one is being accused by another woman of sleeping with her husband. During the time of this ronda, the husband was away working in the mines so was not being prosecuted as well. It was debated if he would ever return partly out of fear of what the ronda might do to him. Whippings are a common form of castigation for adultery, and thieves are punished especially hard by sometimes hanging them upside down from a bridge while repeatedly dunking their head in the freezing cold river. After testimonies given by several eyewitnesses, who even had photographs of the affair, the woman from the different ayllu eventually admitted to the case of adultery. She was stripped to her underwear and made to crawl around the circle on her hands and knees in shame and penance. She was then taken by other women to a nearby river to wash herself in the freezing water. It was decided by the ronda that she must return to the ayllu from which she came, and it was stressed that cases of adultery such as this are dangerous for the ways in which they break apart families and create divisions within and between ayllus.

Although it is not visible in this photo, on the outskirts of the circle, there are a number of guards who are patrolling the circle with whips. Their duty is to control the flow of people into and out of the ronda a bit like the ukukus at the pilgrimage shrine who control the flow of people with their whips. When I arrived at the event, I was able to pass through the guards because I showed up with a Jesuit priest named Padre Antonio who helped organize this particular ronda in the early 1990s. After Antonio played his part in making the complaint against the health care clinic over the case of the dead man’s body, he left, and I stayed a bit longer. Then, a few hours later, when I tried to leave because I was tired, the guards would not allow me and told me that I had to stay until the end of the ronda. Seeing me talking with the guards, Lucio came over and told them that I had a family emergency to attend to, so they eventually let me go. Keeping ayllus and families together in tight-knit circles seemed to be of particular importance to the ronda.

After having described the rondas a bit, I would like to return now to the story of Lucio’s brother, Graciano Mandura, who was chosen by this same ronda to run for mayor of Ocongate. Graciano was an ideal candidate for the ronda because he was seen as capable of straddling both worlds—that of the Runakuna and the Mistikuna. Making an appearance in Earth Beings, de la Cadena observes, “reading and writing, a university degree, a house in Ocongate, and earning a salary from an NGO: all this would qualify Mandura as misti or a non-run” (2015: 267). Although Graciano may have become a Misti when he left Pacchanta, got
an education, and a job with an NGO, many Runakuna still see him as one of them when he interacts with them. Simply put, when Graciano is among Mistikuna, he is Misti, and when he is among Runakuna, he is Runa. In addition to Lucio and his family, who still see their relative as a Runa, a couple of de la Cadena’s interlocutors explained to her:

He is like us, runa class, he has runa blood. Some runakuna, when they read and write do not want to be seen like us, they want to be respected like the misti; they do not respect runakuna. Graciano is not scared of the misti and he respects us, he is like us, he has runa blood, runa clothes, runa class [runa yawar, runa p’achayuq, runa clase]. Now, one from the runa class is mayor; the ronda won (2015: 267).

Indeed, the ronda won when their candidate for mayor took office. However, in addition to representing the interests of the ronda, Graciano had to represent the interests of the state’s political party called Acción Popular who sponsored his electoral campaign and paid for his advertisements (ibid.). This put Graciano into quite a tricky position—a bit like a tightrope walker, he had to balance the interests of the ronda and Acción Popular without leaning too far to one side or the other.

Despite the difficulties involved, Graciano’s term as mayor was regarded by many as a success. As de la Cadena describes, “among other things, he supported a mobilization in defence of Ausangate, the major earth-being in the region, against a possible mine that was projected to cut through it [. . .] he agreed with many in the region that mining Ausangate would be equivalent to destroying the earth-being, something that Ausangate itself would not tolerate” (2015: 270). With the success of Graciano’s term as mayor of Ocongate, his reputation spread through the surrounding region, and in 2010, he was elected mayor of Quispicanchis which put him into a higher-ranking position in the political hierarchy. As described in the Introduction, while Pacchanta is one of the many ayllus that compose the district of Ocongate, Ocongate is just one of the many districts that make up the larger province of Quispicanchis in a series of hierarchically encompassing containers. With this move to provincial mayor of Quispicanchis, the ronda which initially selected him no longer had any power over him since their influence is limited to the district of Ocongate. When Graciano became mayor of Quispicanchis, he effectively left the ronda and “was now free to abide only by the rules of representative democracy” (de la Cadena 2015: 271).

However, ending her discussion of Graciano, de la Cadena writes, “leaving Ocongate and the ronda and moving to Quispicanchis does not simplistically suggest that he left the runakuna world behind. It may have been easier to leave the politics of the ronda behind than to sever relations with earth-beings which are central to the making of the runakuna world”
(2015: 272). Indeed, during the time of my fieldwork, Graciano had not severed his relations with earth-beings nor his kin in Pacchanta, and I do not imagine him doing so in the future. He returns several times a year to celebrate events such as his brother’s birthday, New Years, the baptism of his niece and nephew, the Day of the Dead, and Carnaval. I would like to turn the attention now to the celebration of Carnaval—a festival that includes earth-beings and alpacas together with Runakuna like Graciano, at least, Runa when he is in Pacchanta.

f. Carnaval

When Graciano and his family arrived to El Mirador, with the music from the loudspeaker blasting above our heads, I expected the celebrations to begin immediately. A bit to my surprise, however, the morning was quite calm and subdued. We all spent the morning just kind of hanging out. Lucio showed everyone with pride the new duck pond that he had built. We then went to the area where the alpacas were grazing to check out the latest prized additions to the herd. Pulling some wool out from the bodies of a few alpacas, Graciano inspected the quality by holding it close to his eyes like a doctor in a clinic inspecting his patient (Foucault 2003). When Graciano showed approval and congratulated his younger brother for the fine quality of the wool, Lucio smiled. After walking around the farm a bit, Graciano then sat down in El Mirador to chew coca leaves and chat with his mother, Vinita. The two children that were with him went on to play with their cousins, and the caretaker of the children joined Sebastiana in the work of preparing lunch. Graciano’s wife did not join us this day nor any day during my own brief time in Pacchanta. She is a high school teacher in Ocongate, and like Graciano, it seems that she prefers life at the lower elevation.

After eating lunch, I helped Lucio herd the alpacas into the corral that we had selected for this occasion and everyone soon gathered into the space with them. Then, Lucio and Vinita began to set the ritual table—somewhat similar to the way that the altar was prepared for the mass at Juvenal’s house as I described in Chapter Three. First, Lucio took one of Sebastiana’s earth-coloured hand-woven textiles, and he placed it on the ground. Vinita then took out a few handfuls of coca leaves and spread them over the cloth. In front of this textile, they set down another much more colourful one and began to place many different things on top of it—flowers, serpentine, confetti, and q’eros (the ritual drinking cup that I described in Chapter Three which I used as a chalice for mass). To the side of the cloth, we then placed beer and rum bought from a store in the market, homemade corn beer and sugarcane alcohol, a couple bags of coca leaves, Fanta, and Inca Kola—both products of the Coca-Cola Company and
potent sources of animu. As we prepared the table, the alpacas munched on the grass in front of us and a slightly overcast Ausangate watched it all unfold.

Vinita and Graciano on the right and Lucio on the left preparing for Carnaval

After setting the mesa (“table”), we all shared coca leaves and alcohol with Ausangate, Pachamama, and with each other in the customary fashion that I described in Chapters One and Two as well as the Introduction. One of the differences on this occasion is that we began to share alcohol with the alpacas as well by throwing q’eros full of beer onto them. We then took the flowers, serpentine, and confetti that had been placed on the textiles and threw it all onto the alpacas too. I was told that we are festejando (“partying”) the alpacas and the more that we celebrate them, the more fertile, happy, and productive they will be. As all of this was taking place, we were also busy blowing up colourful plastic balloons and tying them together with ribbons. When the bundles of balloons were ready, we took them to the alpacas and tied them around their necks. Like the difficulty of flipping an alpaca on its side, as I described in Chapter One, catching an alpaca and tying a bundle of balloons around its neck is not the easiest task.

16 A chemical processing plant in New Jersey owned by the Stepan Company is one of the few commercial enterprises in the U.S. that is authorized by the Drug Enforcement Administration to import coca leaves. With the leaves, the company manufactures a cocaine-free extract which it then sells to the Coca-Cola Company for use in its products. While the DEA allows the Stepan and Coca-Cola Companies to import and use tonnes of coca leaves in this way, it prohibits tourists like me from entering the country with even a single leaf, bag of coca tea, or piece of coca hard candy. See Gootenberg (2008) Andean Cocaine and Elmore (2014) Citizen Coke for more on this topic.
Lucio told me that this particular alpaca is his closest attempt so far to cross-breed them in such a way as to get the colour blue.

After *festejando* the alpacas with the balloons, Lucio then took a white flag that he had flying on a stick from *El Mirador*, and he placed it in the centre of the corral. To the rhythm of the *huayno* music that had been blasting from the loudspeaker since 6am, we proceeded to dance in circles around the flag for a couple of hours until it got dark. When I asked Lucio why the flag is white, he told me that it is white like the snow on Ausangate. Similar to the *inqaychus* and the miniature version of Ausangate in *El Mirador* that I described in Chapter Two and the Introduction, I would like to propose that, in addition to the sharing of coca leaves and alcohol with the mountain, the white flag was a way of bringing Ausangate into the corral and making the *Apu* present in that place. The white flag was not only a representation of Ausangate; we really were dancing with and around the *Apu*. 
After a long afternoon of drinking and dancing, Lucio returned the white flag to El Mirador, the alpacas were guided to a separate corral to sleep, and the rest of us went into the Runakuna house to eat. After dinner, different members of the family began to go to their own rooms to sleep while I stayed up a little longer with Lucio and Graciano to continue drinking. I eventually trickled off to sleep as well and unfortunately missed the opportunity at sunrise when Lucio and his brother went to the chakra, the field where the potatoes grow, to festejar the potatoes in the same way that we had celebrated the alpacas. When I woke up, Graciano and his family were gone, on their way back down to Ocongate and further on to Cusco to return to Mistikuna life. Carnaval was over, and the loudspeaker was off, at least until next year when the music would call back out again for others to come join in.

In the celebration of Carnaval, many different things are brought together. Runakuna, Mistikuna, and Turistikuna (“tourists” like me) are drawn in by the music, the paqochakuna (“alpacas”) are herded into the corral, and Pachamama and Ausangate are invited to join in as well through the sharing of coca leaves and alcohol with them. In this convergence, the boundaries between one thing and another are blurred as alpacas, mountains, the earth, and humans all drink, chew, and dance together. Taking Victor Turner’s (1969) idea of communitas one step further, this is a communitas that merges not only humans but humans and nonhumans as well. However, as I will explain, the convergence is only temporary.
In the last chapter, I described sacrifice as a way of pulling things together and establishing connections between initially disconnected entities (Descola 2013; Lévi-Strauss 1966), but I also mentioned that sacrifice works in the opposite direction as well: it “restores a world of separations” (Graeber 2011: 45) and “re-establishes the tenuous separateness of realms” (Rio 204: 337-338). As Mayblin and Course put it, sacrifice involves “a variety of processes concerned with collapsing and restoring ontological divides” (2014: 316).

While many different things converge in the corral for Carnaval, I would like to suggest that the activities that take place are, like the pilgrimage, sacrificial practices that simultaneously work to restore “a world of separations.” The sharing of coca leaves, the drinking, and the dancing are sacrificial performances that bring together and blur the boundaries between humans, alpacas, and metapersons only to restore and reinforce the separateness of these realms when the party is over and everyone goes back to their respective homes. Like the jokes and burlesque of the trickster-like ukuku that I described in the last chapter, “carnivalesque” (Bakhtin 1984) suspensions of boundaries are only temporary performances that ultimately reinstate the initial order that was disrupted.

g. Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the fluidity of many different categories of being and belonging. I have shown how “persons” are able to move in and out of categories such as Runa, Misti, and indigenous, and in the last section, I have illustrated how alpacas, mountains, and the earth celebrate as persons in the corral. Being and belonging to a particular category of identification is not a pre-determined essence; rather, one’s place is the result of specific practices and sets of relations with others. The kind of person that a person is, is produced, not given. For this reason, transformation from one state into another is always possible.

A reflection on the ways in which personhood is produced is not necessarily a novel insight. From Mauss (1985) to Strathern (1988) to Wagner (1991) and many more, essentialised understandings of personhood have been repeatedly challenged. In this chapter, I simply want to contribute to this topic with ethnographic material that details why constructions of personhood are important and matter to people like Lucio and his brother Graciano. When Graciano comes home, it is important for him to be Runa again with friends and family, and when he returns to the city, it is strategically more advantageous for him to be mestizo. However, as I have shown through the case of the ukuku candidate for mayor, claims
to an indigenous identity are beginning to grow in the Andes, and in certain contexts and situations, it might be more advantageous to be indigenous.

Moreover, in this chapter, I have made an effort to expand discussions of personhood by including material on the ways in which nonhumans like Ausangate and alpacas are constructed as persons. The attribution of personhood to nonhumans has real and practical implications and consequences, and if nonhumans are treated as persons, it is important to ask: well, if a mountain is a person, what kind of a person is the mountain? As shown in the last chapter, for example, different understandings of what the mountain glacier is has different implications for the ways in which humans relate to it. Ontological assumptions about what something is guides ethical relations toward it.
Chapter Six: Mimesis, Miniatures, and Mountains

“For Christ plays in ten thousand places”
---Gerard Manley Hopkins

a. Mass at the Quyllurit’i Pilgrimage Shrine

Packed inside a crowded church at the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine, I was standing at the altar looking out and down over the roughly one thousand people in front of and below me. Holding a large communion wafer carefully in my hands, I raised it slightly above the altar, and mimicking in Quechua the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, said:

CHASKIYCHIS, MIKHUCHISTAQ KAY T’ANTATA,
KAYMI NOQAQ KURKUY,
PAYMI QANQONA-RAYKU ENTREGASQA KANQA

which (more or less) translates as:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

Conch shell horns and plastic whistles began to blow as I raised the body of Christ in the form of bread above my head for all to see. After a few seconds, I lowered my arms, set down the host, and genuflected behind the altar—momentarily disappearing from the sight of the congregation. For a few moments, the mediators were gone (at least two of the mediators) as the audience’s sightlines were guided no longer toward the priest or the bread but directly toward an image of the crucified Christ painted on a boulder behind the altar. With the priest and the bread out of sight, the congregation was now face to face with El Señor de Quyllurit’i looking out and down over them.

Through the mediations of the priest, the bread, and the image of Christ on the boulder, the ritual aimed to create an experience of immediacy with the divine by flipping back and forth between hiding the mediators and putting them dramatically on display (van de Port 2011). But, of course, rituals don’t always “work” and produce the intended effects (Engelke & Tomlinson 2006). I’m sure that not everyone was paying attention and, despite the layout of the church which is designed in such a way as to direct the audience’s gaze forward toward the altar, some people were probably turned around and looking in the opposite direction. Plus, the priest, at least in his head, wasn’t really into it that much either.
Crouched down on one knee hiding behind the altar, I thought to myself, “What the hell am I doing here? How did I get here? I don’t want to be here anymore.” I was incredibly uncomfortable with the role that I was performing and the way in which the architectural structure of the space positioned me in the place of El Señor—hierarchically set above and apart from the rest of congregation. Ducked down and hidden behind the altar, for a moment, at least, I could breathe and be myself (Daniel) while the congregation’s gaze was directed toward “the real Señor” on the rock behind me. But, of course, to be less dramatic, this was not the first time that I had had critical thoughts regarding the ideological implications of church architecture. Being both a ritual performer and a critic of the performances that I was performing was a tightrope line that I was accustomed to walking as a Jesuit and an aspiring anthropologist. So, thinking that now was probably not the best diplomatic moment to launch into a critique of the performance and suggest alternative forms of liturgical spatial arrangement, I popped back up from behind the altar like a magician reappearing in a disappearing act and reassumed my position in the place of El Señor. Similar to the ukuku candidate for mayor that I described in the last chapter standing in front of Ausangate, a priest standing at the altar is a performative act that works to align the priest with the power of the divine nonhuman and place him in a hierarchically superior position over other humans.

After consecrating the bread, I proceeded with the wine. Following the script of the mass in Quechua,17 which I will now simply write in English, I shifted from a first-person to a third-person perspective as I said in a story-telling tone of voice:

In a similar way, when supper was ended,
he took the chalice
and, once more giving thanks,
he gave it to his disciples, saying:
(And then back into the first-person perspective of Jesus with a slight change in the tone of my voice):

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
The blood of the new and eternal convenant,
which will be poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.

---

17 See Durston (2007) Pastoral Quechua: The History of Christian Translation in Colonial Peru, 1550-1650 for an examination of early efforts by Spanish missionaries to translate the Catholic mass and other aspects of Catholicism into Quechua.
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

Conch shell horns and plastic whistles began to blow once again as I elevated the chalice above my head for all to see. Then, as instructed to do so by the text in red from the script that I was reading, I put the chalice back down on the altar, genuflected, and disappeared from the audience only to pop right back up and continue with this mimetic performance of the Last Supper.

In Catholic theology, a priest presiding at mass is understood to be acting In Persona Christi, that is, “In the Person of Christ.” Through speaking in the words of Christ as depicted in the Gospels and in performing the ritual gestures of the Last Supper, the priest temporarily suspends his own identity and takes on the identity of Christ. As Mayblin (2019) explains, the idea of In Persona Christi has an ontological weight to it that goes beyond simple imitation or mimicry; she writes:

Whereas Imitatio Christi could be defined as the act of imitating Christ by copying his example, and therefore as a type of ongoing discipline accessible to all Christians, In Persona Christi is a charismatic and ontologically more transformative version of this idea. Rather than a discipline like Imitatio, In Persona is a gift bestowed only on the ordained clergy, allowing them to embody or “impersonate” Christ at the moment of Eucharistic communion (2019: 528).

In other words, the priest quite literally becomes an alter Christi, an-other Christ, and in this particular case at the pilgrimage shrine, a locally specific manifestation of Christ named El Señor de Quyllurit’i (“The Lord of Shining Snow”). With the idea of In Persona Christi, the distinction between self and other collapses as the two identities of priest and Christ merge. As I have repeated several times throughout this thesis, difference is encompassed by sameness once again; however, that work of encompassment is never total and complete—there is always something other on the other side because otherness is continuously being produced in opposition to formations of the self in different political contexts over time (Lévi-Strauss 1995; Viveiros de Castro 2001).

In this chapter, I would like to explore a variety of ways in which the power, animu, or life-force of alterity is incorporated into the self through mimetic performances at the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine. In so doing, I argue for a form of mimesis that includes both the logics of representation and participation. In addition to representing, mimicking, and imitating otherness, I show how there is a continuity as well as a discontinuity between “the copy” and “the original” (Benjamin 1982; Derrida 1992; Taussig 2018 [1993]). Signifiers and signifieds both come together and are set apart. Moving beyond the personal example of priestly
mediation and mimesis that I just shared in order to set the tone and topic for this chapter, I will first focus on the ritualized use of miniatures that take place in a series of “games” just outside the church doors. In this section, I will also describe one particularly important miniature called an *apachita* which is commonly found throughout the Andes outside the context of the festival. After discussing these miniatures, I will then focus on three statuettes that are escorted from the shrine to the towns of Tayankani and Ocongate during a “mini-pilgrimage within the pilgrimage” known as *La Procesión de 24 Horas* (“The Procession of 24 Hours”) (Sallnow 1987: 228). In the two sections on this procession, I will highlight how the transfers of these statuettes help illuminate complex and dynamic power relationships between essentializing categories such as indigenous and mestizo, rural and urban, female and male, and “pagan” and Christian. Throughout the chapter, I will be illustrating various ways in which the life-force, power, and *animu* of the other is drawn in and incorporated into the self through mimetic performances, and it is at these sites where the two (or more) sides intersect where power is concentrated, condensed, and contained.

b. Miniatures

After presiding at mass at the shrine, I went outside the church and decided to take a walk around to see what else was going on. When I came to a fairly flat spot just above the main sanctuary and next to a smaller Marian chapel, I saw many people gathered together in what appeared to be a crowded marketplace. But unlike a typical marketplace, the things that were being exchanged here were “not real.” People were using “fake money” or “play money” to buy things like miniature toy trucks, tractors, and houses—all made out of colourful plastic. Many other things were on sale as well such as miniature Coca-Cola bottles painted in such a way as to make them appear full, small dolls of human babies, marriage licenses, university diplomas, and deeds and titles for houses. As people engaged in this buying and selling of goods, some others were walking around and being paid to sign official documents to authenticate the sales; they were “acting” as notaries. I was particularly amused by one man “pretending” to be a priest as he officiated at a mock wedding. When one woman recognized me as a “real priest,” she asked me to bless with holy water a miniature house made out of stones that she had just purchased. I proceeded to perform the blessing while thinking to myself, “How odd. Is this a ‘real’ blessing of a ‘fake’ house, or a ‘fake’ blessing of ‘fake’ house? Or perhaps, a ‘real’ of a ‘real,’ or a ‘fake’ of a ‘real’?” My answer to the dilemma was made even more difficult given the fact that I was seriously considering leaving the priesthood at the time.
(which I eventually did). I felt like a “fake” too. What makes something “real?” What makes something “fake?” What’s the difference between “reality” and “make-believe?”

A similar scene to the one that I just described has been illustrated by several ethnographers who have written about the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine albeit with some notable changes over the decades. When Michael Sallnow visited the shrine in 1973, he describes how he stopped with a group of pilgrims at a place just before the shrine called Pukllay Pampa (“the playing ground”) to engage in a series of activities that he calls “games of make-believe” (1987: 189). He writes, “one of our number bought a cow from a companion, in reality a lump of quartz, for which he gave a handful of scraps of paper representing money” (ibid.). He also illustrates how he was enlisted to act as a magistrate and had to hear cases brought before him; he relates, “one involved a man from our contingent jokingly accused of abandoning his wife for another woman; judgment having been passed, he was hustled away and thrown into prison behind some rocks” (1987: 190). As these playful performances were unfolding, Sallnow notes that “others, meanwhile, occupied themselves privately in the construction of elaborate miniature houses and corrals out of rocks, with stones representing llamas, alpacas, and sheep, to indicate to the spirits of the shrine the devotee’s desire” (ibid.). Sallnow describes the whole scene as a “strange interlude” of “various kinds of foolery” and “general horseplay” that provided a bit of “catharsis” during an otherwise solemn and serious journey to the shrine (1987: 189-190).

In the article, “When Pebbles Move Mountains,” Catherine Allen (1997) comments on a similar scene that she encountered based on her visits to the shrine; however, she writes, “my companions were somewhat less spirited than Sallnow’s” (1997: 74). She says, “I was struck by the intensity of the young couples as they searched for stones shaped like alpacas, llamas, sheep, and cows and then carefully placed them in their little corrals” (ibid.). While Sallnow interpreted the event as cathartic fun, Allen saw it as more serious business. She explains the activity as “a mode of communication between human beings and deities […] the pebble households are iconic messages presented to mountain lords and saints to request specific material favours” (1997: 75). She then compares the stone miniatures to other types of miniatures from the pilgrimage such as the icons called taytachas (“little fathers”) that are escorted to the shrine each year as well as the small dolls that the ukukus wear which look like miniature versions of themselves. Allen describes miniature objects such as these as “tiny

---

18 Both of these miniatures I describe in detail in Chapter Three.
storehouses of prosperity and well-being” (1997: 75). In other words, the miniatures are “power objects” that bring fortune and good luck (Allen 1997: 77).

Based on a more recent trip to the Quyllurití shrine, Astrid Stensrud (2010) provides a similar account of this play with miniatures; however, her description includes some notable differences from earlier portrayals. In addition to the tiny houses, corrals, and animals made out of stone, she, like I, observed many other items called alasitas that are made out of plastic such as toy trucks, computers, and cell phones. Stensrud writes, “This playing has changed according to the process of change in economy and technology and with the increase of pilgrims from the cities (cf. Poole 1988). Today there are [fewer] alpacas and more computers being traded” (2010: 51 as cited in Allen 2016: 418). Nevertheless, despite the differences between stone alpacas and plastic computers, Stensrud concludes that the play with miniatures “are expressions of the same ontology” (2010: 58 as cited in Allen 2016: 435). She explains the play as a mimetic performance that connects the miniature with possession of “the real thing.”

In a later article on the same topic, Allen (2016) relates the use of miniatures at the Quyllurití shrine to other practices throughout the Andes that involve a similar dynamic. Referring to the work of many different ethnographers, she writes:

In northern Argentina, for example, pastoralists populate miniature stone corrals with pebble llamas as they celebrate their flesh-and-blood llamas in August (Bugallo and Tomasi 2012:11). Also in August, pastoralists in Apurimac, Peru, build little corrals for animals made of maize flour and grease (Tomoeda 2013). Agriculturalists in Apurimac celebrate their cattle during Carnival (February) and the feast of Santiago (July 25) by fashioning figurines of llama fat and maize flour, which they call kallpa (vital force); these are burned at the end of the ceremony (Gose 1994: 20). For herders in Isluga, Chile, the Christmas season includes ‘playing with clay’—that is, modelling clay figures of animals and trucks (Van Kessel 1992). Penelope Harvey reports that in Ocongate, Peru, on August 1, people use wet clay from the riverbanks to make models of objects they would like to have, including houses and motor bikes. ‘They also libate the miniatures (as they would animals) to enhance their reproductive capacity’ (Harvey 2001: 201) (Allen 2016: 419).

As Allen shows, the mimetic use of miniatures for the sake of gaining some type of prosperity is not exclusive to the Quyllurití shrine; it is a widespread phenomenon throughout the Andes, and indeed, in many other places as well (Taussig 2018 [1993]).

In some ways, this use of miniatures may be understood within the logic of what Frazer (1911) calls “sympathetic magic.” Frazer explains that there are two types of sympathetic magic. The first is based on the law of resemblance. According to the logic of resemblance, there is a likeness between the created object such as a plastic toy truck and the subject that is
being copied—a “real” truck. The idea is that just as a person “buys” the “toy truck” with “fake money” so too in “real life” may the person buy a “real truck” with “real money.” While a mimetic performance at the Quyllurit’i shrine may be a “playful game,” it is simultaneously serious business.

The second type of sympathetic magic is based on the law of contagion. According to its logic, there is a continuity between one object and another with which it has been in physical contact. For example, to continue using examples from the shrine, the miniature icons of Quyllurit’i called taytachas (“little fathers”) or demandas that I described in Chapter Three and the Introduction may be understood following this rule. As I illustrated, the demandas travel to the shrine each year, and they are placed next to the image of Quyllurit’i on the boulder in the church where they sit for a few days. When the festival ends, they are taken from the sanctuary and brought back to the communities from which they originate. In this ritual performance, the pilgrims bring the blessing and grace of Quyllurit’i from the shrine and into the community by literally bringing a piece of his body (which is simultaneously all of his body) with them. In line with the logic of contagion, there is a continuity between the demanda and the boulder in the sanctuary. Rather than simply being a metaphor for Quyllurit’i, the demanda is also a metonym; it is a part that stands for the whole. However, since the demanda is also a replicated image of the painting of Quyllurit’i on the boulder, the logic of resemblance is at play at the same time. The two rules are not opposed to each other and may operate simultaneously; however, to be clear: resemblance is not necessary for contagion to work (Taussig 2018 [1993]).

In rethinking her earlier work on miniatures in the Andes, Allen (2016) has made a few revisions to her previous analysis. While she initially described miniatures such as households made out of pebbles as “iconic messages presented to mountain lords and saints to request specific material favours,” she more recently understands them in a light that moves beyond the logic of representation (1997: 75). According to Allen, a stone miniature of an alpaca, for example, called an inqaychu, is not a representation of an alpaca in order to get more alpacas; rather, inqaychus are “literal instantiations” of the mountain Apu who is the owner of the alpacas (2016: 436). The miniature stone alpacas are storehouses of the Apu’s animating power which give life to the herds.

Furthermore, while Allen sees along with Stensrud (2010) some continuities between inqaychus and alasitas such as plastic toy trucks, she highlights some important differences as well. She writes, “An inqaychu instantiates a powerful mountain in the heart of the household; the alasita represents a contract between the pilgrim and the saint” (2016: 436). Unlike
*ingaychus, alasitas* are kept in plain sight in the household such as in the kitchen, and Allen proposes that they help keep the pilgrim focused on the goal of achieving that which they represent (2016: 435-436). In this way, the logic of representation is at work that is different from the logic of instantiation. However, I would like to note that Lucio keeps his *ingaychus “in plain sight”* and even puts them dramatically on display in that place called *El Mirador* (“The Viewpoint”) which helps to keep him focused on achieving that which they represent. With this detail, I would like to suggest that the logics of representation and instantiation do not have to be opposed to one another but simultaneously co-exist and co-operate.

To use a few other examples that illustrate this point: as I described in the last chapter, the white flag that we danced around during *Carnaval* was both a representation of Ausangate and quite literally Ausangate present in that place. The white flag, like *ingaychus, demandas*, and the “replica” of Ausangate that Lucio built, was a way of drawing in and making present the *anima* of the more distant and hierarchically encompassing mountain. The same logic is at play in the Catholic celebration of the Eucharist. According to Catholic theology, the bread and wine that the priest consecrates during the mass is not only a representation or symbol of the body and blood of Christ but *is* the body and blood of Christ. Similarly, the priest is not only a representative of Christ but is *In Persona Christi* (“In the Person of Christ”). As I highlighted in Chapter Three, the cosmology that I am describing in this thesis is deeply Catholic and Andean at the same time. With these examples, I hope it is clear how representations in which there is a discontinuity between “things” simultaneously operates alongside instantiations in which there is a continuity between them as well.

Before concluding this section, I would like to discuss one more miniature known as an *apachita* that especially struck my attention during fieldwork. On one level, *apachitas* are quite simply accumulations of rocks that have been built by humans; they are somewhat similar to cairns here in Scotland or *inukshuks* in the Arctic, and they come in variety of shapes and sizes. For example, an *apachita* might be a large pile of rocks the size of a car or a small tower that rises just a foot off the ground. *Apachitas* are commonly found throughout the Andes on mountain passes, crossroads, and places where significant features of the landscape like other mountain peaks first come into view (Dean 2006).

However, for a number of different reasons, an *apachita* is not simply a “pile of rocks” or a “tower of stones.” One reason is because people use the term to refer not just to a particular “pile of rocks” but also to the very place where these piles of rocks are found. For example, the mountain pass above Pacchanta in between Ausangate and his wife Callangate is regarded to be a particularly important *apachita* because it provides access to the other side of the
mountain. It is a passageway that connects places separated by mountains, and on this pass, humans have built hundreds of *apachitas* of various shapes and sizes over the years. *Apachitas* are simultaneously the piles of rocks that have been built on this pass and the mountain pass itself. The following is a photo of that very *apachita* with *apachitas* on it.

I took the photo during a climbing trip with a guy from Pacchanta named Enrique who generates income through working as a climbing guide for tourists. On this particular trip, we got caught in a storm coming down from the summit of one of Ausangate’s and Callangate’s children named Jampa, and we were very happy to have finally found this *apachita* to help guide our descent back home to Pacchanta. The *apachita* simultaneously served as a reference point, a boundary marker, and a place to share some coca leaves and *trago* with each other and the *Apus* around us. Like the *wak’as* that I described in the Introduction, an *apachita* is a powerful place where many different roads converge.

Returning now to the Quyllurit’i shrine: on the final eight-kilometre trek from the road to the sanctuary, there is a series of several large *apachitas* that similarly guide the way. When I went to the shrine for the first time in 2016, I was travelling with a group of pilgrims called a *comparsa*, and as we set off walking from the road, I was instructed to pick up a rock and carry it uphill to the first *apachita*. When we arrived at the top of the first big hill, I placed my rock on the large pile of stones that made up the *apachita* and I was told that my sins were now
forgiven and that carrying the stone up the hill was my penance. We then proceeded to play a song to Quyllurit’i and did the same at each apachita along the path to the sanctuary. Apachitas are simultaneously landmarks that guide the way, resting points on the journey, and on a cosmological level, they are pieces of Quyllurit’i’s, Ausangate’s, and Pachamama’s distributed and fractal body. Carolyn Dean describes an apachita as a “diminutive incarnation, or better yet, the miniaturized petrescence of spirits associated with Andean topography” (2006: 104). Like the incaychus, the demandas, the Eucharist, and the ukuku dolls, apachitas are pieces of the metapersons who compose them, and as such, they are storehouses or condensations of that powerful animating energy called animu.

While there are several large apachitas along the trail from the road to the shrine, I also saw several smaller ones that were built in the area where people were playing what Sallnow called “games of make-believe.” One of my favourites was a carefully constructed tower whose interior contained “fake” thousand-dollar bills and whose exterior was draped with colourful serpentine.

When I saw the apachita, I thought, my God! It looks like a miniaturized version of a mountain, and I understand now why Lucio told me that the interior of Ausangate is filled with gold,
monkeys, and petrol. Apachitas, like their hierarchically encompassing mountain metaperson counterparts, are storehouses of animu and what gives more power and enables life to “go about” more than thousand-dollar bills! Well, trucks do the same—that’s why some apachitas had plastic “toy” trucks on their summits—instantiations of power, embodiments of animu. An apachita, like the other miniatures that I have been describing, is a place where the power of alterity is drawn in and made present; it is a crossroads and an intersection of self and other.

c. El Señor de Tayankani

As I described in Chapter Three, when the eight lines of hundreds of ukukus descended from the glacier at sunrise with the crosses, they converged with thousands of other pilgrims at the main sanctuary where the image of Quyllurit’i is housed. A final mass was then celebrated outside the sanctuary so that a greater number of pilgrims could attend than would have been possible inside the church given the constraints of the space. At the end of the mass, buckets upon buckets of holy water were thrown over the pilgrims who were desperately trying to get a few splashes on their bodies and on the various objects that they were holding such as plastic “toy” trucks, “make-believe” university diplomas, “play” U.S. dollars, and dolls of human babies. While all of this was happening, the demandas ("icons")/taytachas ("little
fathers”) that had been sitting next to the image of Christ on the boulder inside the church were being returned to the groups of pilgrims called comparsas that had brought them to the shrine. Now, the lines of pilgrims could flow back out from the shrine in many different directions bringing the blessing, grace, and animu of El Señor de Quyllurit´i with them. And, just when one might think that the final stage of the pilgrimage had begun—that is, “the return home,” there is yet another stage in the ritual cycle of events that I would like to discuss and that is often overlooked in descriptions of the festival. It involves a 24-hour walk from the shrine to the towns of Tayankani and Ocongate and is known as La Procesión de 24 Horas (“The Procession of 24 Hours”).

While hundreds of different communities each have their own demanda (“icon”) or taytacha (“little father”), there are two particularly important and significantly larger icons of Christ that I need to discuss in order to explain The Procession of 24 Hours. One is a plastic statuette of El Señor de Quyllurit´i that is housed in a wooden box in the shape of a cross with a clear glass front. Throughout the year, this icon resides in the chapel in Mahuayani—the starting point from the highway to the shrine. The other image is a similar statuette called El Señor de Tayankani, which is located in the district capital of Ocongate, where Lucio’s brother, Graciano, served as mayor. Both of these statuettes are nearly identical which leads many pilgrims to think that there is only one statuette involved in the procession instead of two (Salas Carreño 2006).

On the feast day of the Ascension, about a month prior to the main festival, these two icons begin to move as they are escorted by different groups of devotees from one place to another. The icon of Quyllurit´i from Mahuayani is taken to the main pilgrimage sanctuary where it is placed next to the image of Christ on the boulder in the church. Meanwhile, on the same day, the icon of El Señor de Tayankani is taken from a small chapel in Ocongate and is escorted to another small chapel in the village of Tayankani. Roughly one month later, when the ukukus descend from the glacier and after the final mass during the main pilgrimage event, the icon of Quyllurit´i that is normally housed in Mahuayani does not immediately return to its home in Mahuayani but rather begins a trip to visit the icon in Tayankani. This trip from the main pilgrimage shrine to Tayankani is known as La Procesión de 24 Horas. The following map (also in the form of a miniaturized replica) provides an illustration of this quite complicated ritual sequence of events. It also provides a general overview of the area from the point of view of an even more hierarchically encompassing position than that of Ausangate’s— that is, from the position of the reader and writer as mediated by Google Earth and Microsoft Word.
La Virgen Dolorosa
El Señor de Quyllurit’i
Glacier Crosses
El Señor de Tayankani

As seen in the map, in addition to the three images of Christ: the one painted on the boulder and the two statuettes housed in cross-shaped cases, there is one more statuette that/who plays a key role in *La Procesión* as well: that is, a plastic statuette of La Virgen Dolorosa, known in English as Our Lady of Sorrows. Throughout the year, La Virgen Dolorosa normally resides with El Señor de Tayankani in the chapel in Ocongate. However, in advance of the main pilgrimage event, she is taken from Ocongate and is escorted by a group of female devotees to the central pilgrimage shrine. When the *ukukus* descend from the glaciers with the crosses and after the final mass, she is then escorted by women, together with men carrying the icon from Mahuayani, to the village of Tayankani. From Tayankani, she then returns to Ocongate where she resides with El Señor de Tayankani until the ritual cycle repeats itself once again. Notice that La Virgen Dolorosa is the one figure on the map who travels in between the greatest number of places. The significance of this more encompassing form of movement is a detail to which I will later return.
As I have been articulating throughout this thesis, the movement of ritual objects such as the statuettes and the demandas to and from the main Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine is a way of opening up pathways in order to transfer animu from peoples/places that have more of it to peoples/places that have less (Hocart 1970 [1936]). In this case, the greatest concentration of animu is stored in the body of Apu Qolqepunku. It is then transferred through the ukukus carrying the crosses to Quyllurit’i, the boulder in the church, who/that is encompassed by the greater mountain on which he/it sits. From Quyllurit’i, the flow of animu then moves to Tayankani through the pilgrims carrying the statuettes of La Virgen Dolorosa and El Señor de Quyllurit’i where they meet El Señor de Tayankani who sits in a dependent relation to them. From the town of Tayankani, La Virgen and El Señor de Tayankani then return to Ocongate and the statuette of El Señor de Quyllurit’i returns to Mahuayani until the next year when the transfers begin again.

However, while this might appear to be quite a neat and tidy system, the hierarchical cosmology that I am describing is not fixed and static. It is very much a product of history, of course, and locally specific sets of power relations. Contrary to Starn’s (1991) “Missing the Revolution” critique, I do not think that a focus on ritual, religion, and cosmology necessarily
involves a neglect of history and politics. The two are deeply interwoven with each other. The movements and exchanges of icons that take place during The Procession of 24 Hours, for example, illuminate complex sets of power relations between categories such as indigenous and mestizo, male and female, Christian and “pagan,” rural and urban, and rich and poor. In order to understand how the icons shed light on these types of relations, it is worth recalling details from the founding of the shrine that I discussed in Chapter Three, which I will now further reflect upon.

As related by a text from 1932 that details the “origin story” of the shrine which involves a miraculous apparition of Christ, the parish priest of Ccatca named Adrian Mujica hired an artist to paint an image of Christ on the boulder under which Mariano was buried after dying from susto (“fright”) (Ramírez 1969; Salas Carreño 2006; Sallnow 1987). Mujica did so with money that he received from a Runa who prayed to El Señor de Quyllurit‘i for better luck in finding gold. After praying to Quyllurit‘i, the man struck it rich and shared some of the wealth with Mujica. For many pilgrims today, however, the image of Christ on the rock is regarded to be “not made by human hand;” rather, it is popularly said to have appeared miraculously on the rock in the late eighteenth-century following the encounter of Mariano and the mysterious mestizo child named Manuel.

In the book Iconoclash, Bruno Latour observes that many sacred icons share similar genealogies of divine origin, and he uses the Greek term acheiropoieta, which means “not made by the human hand,” to refer to them (2002: 16). Summarising Latour on this point, van de Port writes:

> These icons, so their worshippers believe, have not been crafted by human beings. They fell from heaven without any intermediary, or came into being spontaneously—‘just like that’. And it is exactly the absence of any human involvement in their making that greatly enhances their power. As Bruno Latour stated, if one were able to show that these icons had been made by ‘a humble human painter’, this would be ‘to weaken their force, to sully their origin, to desecrate them’ (2002: 16) (van de Port 2011: 74).

Indeed, when La Hermandad “The Brotherhood” that administers the Quyllurit‘i shrine commissioned in 2003 a restoration of the image on the boulder in order to make it more visible again after years of accumulated grim, many pilgrims were outraged, and in addition to protests over financial corruption, the scandal over the restored image helped trigger a radical reorganisation in the administration of the shrine (Salas Carreño 2006, 2020).

As described in the last chapter, The Brotherhood that administers the shrine was originally founded in the 1940s by vecinos notables (“notable neighbours”) from the towns of
Ccatca and Ocongate who typically identified themselves as mestizos and hierarchically set apart from the Runakuna (Flores Lizana 1997; Salas Carreño 2020; Sallnow 1987). Their mission was “to bring to order the indios who go up there [to the boulder] to dance and carry out drunken excesses” (Flores Lizana 1997: 26 as cited in Salas Carreño 2020: 4). The original name of this organization was The Brotherhood of El Señor de Tayankani, not The Brotherhood of El Señor de Quyllurit’i, as it exists today. As part of their task “to bring to order the indios,” early efforts were made to draw attention away from the boulder in the “isolated” valley and toward a replica of a tayanka tree in the district capital of Ocongate (Salas Carreño 2006; Sallnow 1987). To recall from the origin myth, when Mariano died, Christ appeared on a tayanka tree next to the boulder, and when this tree was sent to the King of Spain, a replica was commissioned to be made in its place. The replicated image, however, did not prove to be as popular and attractive as the boulder under which Mariano was buried, so in an effort to avoid possible “superstition” among the Runakuna, Adrián Mujica, the parish priest of Ccatca, hired the artist to paint the image of Christ on the boulder (Ramírez 1969; Sallnow 1987; Salas Carreño 2006). As Sallnow relates:

Almost from the outset the shrine was split between two icons, which were likewise ethnically contrasted: Señor de Tayankani, the wooden crucifix the original of which first manifested itself to the higher-status, Hispanic visionaries and which was later retained by the monarch himself, and Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i, the painting of the crucifixion on the rock beneath which the Indian seer was interred (1987: 210).

Despite efforts to draw attention to the replica in Ocongate, however, it was the image on the rock that gained in popularity, so The Brotherhood changed its name to The Brotherhood of El Señor de Quyllurit’i in 1960 as part of an attempt to keep some presence at and maintain some order over the festivities at the rock shrine (Salas Carreño 2006).

By the time that anthropologists began to record oral narratives in Quechua about the origin of the shrine in the 1970s and 80s, the stories differed significantly from the one written by Mujica in the 30s. For example, a story from Ccatca makes no mention of the tayanka tree at all and explains how Manuel was an apparition of Christ who disappeared into the rock which now bears his image (Sallnow 1987). This emphasis on the rock instead of the tree is consistent with a long-standing tradition in the Andes of humans transforming into stones such as in the story of Lake Sigrenacocha that I shared in Chapter Four as well as the ancestor in the form of a rock at Lucio’s house that I mentioned as well (see also Dean 2014). Another narration of the miraculous apparition makes links not between Manuel, the boulder, and Christ but between Manuel, the boulder, and Apu Ausangate. In this story, the mysterious mestizo
boy dressed in a white tunic was not an apparition of Christ but rather, an apparition of Ausangate (Gow 1980; Sallnow 1987). As I described in Chapter Two, Ausangate has a plurality of identities—sometimes appearing as a mestizo, sometimes a *Runa*, sometimes a condor, and so forth. In any case, whatever form Ausangate takes, it is always a form that is associated with power, authority, wealth, and might.

The various stories about the origin of the shrine and the movement of the icons highlight complex power dynamics in the region between different types of identities. The stories and icons all involve various representations of otherness and work to incorporate some of the power of that alterity through mimetically portraying it. The statuette of El Señor de Quyllurit’i, for example, that moves from the main pilgrimage shrine to visit El Señor de Tayankani during The Procession of 24 Hours, is decorated in bright red macaw feathers which is a standard part of the attire of another dancer at the festival called a *wayri ch’uncho* (“chief savage”). These dancers, wearing macaw feather headdresses, mimetically portray inhabitants of the Amazon, who, from the *Runakuna* perspective, are *indios* (“indians”), unlike them (Randall 1982; Taussig 1987). Emerging from his work on *yumbo* dancing in Quito, Salomon notes that “dancing in lowland costume is an almost pan-Andean tradition” (1981: 163). In this particular case, by dressing the icon of El Señor de Quyllurit’i in macaw feathers, Quyllurit’i takes on a generalized indigenous identity that is commonly associated with the shrine. Moreover, the icon is also decorated with a rainbow-coloured ribbon which is currently the colour of the flag used to represent the Inkan Empire, another popular sign of indigeneity in the region. In decorating the icon with these colours, Quyllurit’i takes on the power of the Inkans, the so-called indigenous inhabitants of the region. The movement of the icon, dressed in “indigenous” garb, from the rock shrine to Tayankani is a ritual gesture that works to incorporate the alterity of the “indigenous” by mimetically portraying it.

A few more examples will help to further illustrate the point. The same logic holds for the emphasis on the tree instead of the rock in the written narrative about the origin of the shrine as well as the image of Christ painted on the rock. They were attempts to Christianize otherwise “pagan” practices—to draw the Indigenous Other into the Christian Self. Additionally, the movement of La Virgen Dolorosa works along similar lines. For most of the year, she resides in the district capital of Ocongate with El Señor de Tayankani, and she only briefly visits El Señor de Quyllurit’i high up the Sinakara valley during the main pilgrimage event. Her movement from the “peripheral” shrine, which is actually now the centre, works to draw the outside in, to domesticate the wild, and to incorporate difference. It is interesting to note that La Virgen is the one figure on the map who moves in between the greatest number of
places. This, I would suggest, is associated with her identity in Catholic theology as a mediator between God and humans. The more encompassing movements are also related to a common association that is made in the Andes between Mary, “the Mother of God,” and Pachamama, “Earth Mother” (Harris 2000; Nash 1979). As I described in Chapters Two and Three, Pachamama sits in an even more hierarchically encompassing position than Ausangate. Just as Quyllurit’i is a piece of Qolqepunku, and Qolqepunku is a piece of Ausangate, Ausangate is just one of the many pieces of Pachamama, who encompasses all.

However, as I have been arguing throughout this thesis, that work of totalization through the incorporation of difference is never complete (Lévi-Strauss 1995; Viveiros de Castro 2001). No matter the scale there is always something “other” on the “other side.” And that is because the other is always the product of the formation of a self and simultaneously, the very condition for the construction of that self. What makes someone or something a “one” or a “thing,” a subject or an object, indigenous or mestizo, male or female, mountain or person, and so forth, are not fixed and static categories but dynamic ones that are continually transforming themselves and being produced at the crossroads, *apachitas*, and sites of convergence called *tinkus* between selves and others.

In the last section of this chapter, I would like to describe one more *tinku* that takes place during The Procession of 24 Hours in which lines of hundreds of dancers intersect with one another just before arriving in Tayankani only to break back out into separate lines in a fractal network of relations. Here is a photo in advance of that part of The Procession that, like the lines of *ukukus* descending on the shrine from the glacier, dramatically illustrates the idea of a *tinku* on the stage/body of a mountain.
d. La Procesión de 24 Horas

Coming down from the glacier in a long line of *ukukus*, I was exhausted as we converged on the shrine and the final mass of blessing began. I had not slept all night, and I had not even slept that well the night before that one due to all of the music and dancing at the shrine. So, the idea of having to endure yet a third night of no or minimal sleep if I wanted to go on The Procession of 24 Hours was not particularly attractive. Nevertheless, I thought, I don’t get this opportunity often, so I committed myself to joining.

After the final mass, as the majority of pilgrims flowed from the shrine back out and down the valley toward the town of Mahuayani where the Interoceanic Highway passes by, I joined a line of pilgrims going up one of the hills on the side of the valley. As we neared an *apachita* (“pile of rocks” and “mountain pass”) where El Señor de Quyllurit’i and Apu Qolqepunku would go out of sight when we crossed to the other side, we turned around, knelt down facing them, and sang them a song of farewell.
It occurred to me that the plastic blue tarps on the make-shift shops and shelters down below looked like a river flowing down the valley from the glaciated mountains above. I can’t remember exactly, but it may have been one of the many moments during fieldwork when a few tears flowed from my eyes in a strange aesthetic of beauty mixed with suffering and hardship. After the song, we stood back up, turned around, and walked a little farther to the apachita (“pile of rocks”) at the top of the hill. When we arrived at the apachita, we sat down in a circle around a textile with food placed on top of it, and we had a bite to eat and drink. Of course, like with Enrique on the apachita in between Ausangate and Callangate, we shared some coca leaves and a bit of trago with Pachamama and the Apus around us as well. After having a bit to eat and drink, we proceeded en route to Tayankani with a slightly overcast view of Ausangate, Callangate, and the apachita in between them, far off in the distance, to the left of the line.
When we began a descent to another apachita at a place called Yanakancha, the single line of dancers splintered into many as several lines broke off from the one in the middle and began to run along the hills on both sides of the valley. When I looked up from the bottom of the valley, it appeared that the ukukus were chasing a couple of figures dressed in black, and when those figures got closer, I could see that white bones in the form of a human skeleton made up their bodies. With much laughter and delight, I watched with the audience as the ukukus ran, stumbled, and rolled in circles down the hill in pursuit of the skeletons. When I asked the person next to me what was going on, he told me that the ukukus were chasing a couple of condenados, the “living-dead” creatures that I described in Chapter Four. After quite a bit of a struggle on the slopes, the ukukus eventually caught the condenados and brought them to the apachita where the rest of the pilgrims were gathered. Much to everyone’s amusement, the ukukus proceeded to whip the creatures and to kill them in yet another mimetic performance that blends reality and make-believe as well as comedy and horror. After capturing and killing the condenados, more dances were performed as the two icons that we were travelling with were placed in the apachita. We then proceeded to take a rest before moving on to the next apachita where we even managed to get a couple hours of sleep during the overnight procession to Tayankani. As the timing of the pilgrimage is based on the Catholic liturgical year which follows a lunar calendar, the festival always coincides with a full moon as well as the typically
clear skies of the dry season in the Andes, so we had plenty of light from the moon to guide our steps through the night.

Just before sunrise, we made it to the last valley above Tayankani. Here a long line of pilgrims stretched out across the valley facing east. When the first speck of the disk of the sun appeared over the ridge in front of us, conch shell horns and plastic whistles began to blow and echo through the valley in a way that was reminiscent of the performances inside the church when the priest elevates the host for all to see and the sounds of the horns and whistles reverberate off the walls. Olivia Harris (2000) has similarly described associations that the Laymi make in highland Bolivia between the sun, the body of Christ, and a golden case for the host called a monstrance, which is often designed in the form of a sunburst. And, indeed, analogies between the sun and the Son of God are common throughout the history of Christianity (Kilroy-Ewbank 2018). When the sun rose above the ridge, many different lines of dancers then began to run down the valley weaving and zig-zagging in and out of each other like the earlier performance at Yanakancha, but this time, at a much bigger scale. The photo that I shared on page 165 captures one moment of that event.

I would like to propose that this movement of human bodies on the body/stage of a mountain is a mimetic portrayal of fractal patterns that exist “in nature” such as the flows of water in river systems, the circulation of blood in veins, and scorched places on the ground called qhaqhas that have been struck by lightning (as described in Chapter One). The zig-zagging lines that form these patterns are a common motif in Quechua weaving practices; they are called q’enqos and are a symbol of transformation and change (Poole 1990). The sites where these zig-zagging lines intersect are powerful places; they are tinkus (“encounters”) where selves and others unite only to split back out into differing directions in an ongoing series of repetitions with differences at each site of encounter (Deleuze 2004 [1994]). To reiterate, the fractal socio-cosmological system that I am describing is not fixed, closed, and static, but rather open and ongoing because representations of otherness are continually being produced in opposition to formations of the self (Lévi-Strauss 1995). It is very much a product of history and the particular sets of power relations that are involved between different sets of actors. Currently, the movement to Tayankani and further on to Ocongate is a ritual process that works to pull in and incorporate the so-called “Indigenous Other” and to make the district capital the centre of the pilgrimage event. Meanwhile, the “play” at the shrine with plastic toy trucks and “fake” thousand-dollar bills is an attempt to draw in and incorporate the power of “the Other” from a different point in the system. However, some points, as I have been illustrating throughout this thesis, are more powerful than others. While I am politically
committed to transfers that go from the more to the less, too often, of course, the flow is the other way around as the less is consumed and incorporated by the more.

When we arrived at Tayankani, I was as hungry as an ukuku, who, like many other “trickster-figures” from different contexts, is characterized by an extraordinary appetite and insatiable bodily desires (Allen 1983; Brightman 1999; Course 2013b; Sallnow 1987). So, the first thing that I did was look for something to eat and to drink. However, unlike an ukuku, who inverts proper moral behaviour through practices such as stealing (if only to reinstate a particular moral order as described in Chapter Four), I tried to be a little more morally upright by purchasing my food from one of the many vendors who was waiting for our arrival in the hope of making some profit off the event. As I sat down on a boulder to eat and to drink, I then watched as El Señor de Quyllurit’i and La Virgen Dolorosa were escorted into the small chapel before going on to Ocongate and back to Mahuayani. Following them, much to my concern and that of the crowd, was a young ukuku, in his teenage years, being carried away urgently by others. He was passed out. I imagine from the sheer exhaustion of it all—the lack of sleep and little food mixed with the running up and down hills at high altitude and fighting with condenados. I just hoped that the young ukuku was not dead, and not a “real” sacrificial victim.

As discussed in Chapter Four, stories of ukukus dying during the pilgrimage are widespread and are commonly interpreted through the lens of sacrifice (Allen 2002 [1988]; Paerregaard 2020; Sallnow 1987). Through the labour that they perform in carrying the crosses to and from the glacier, the ukukus are sacrificial mediators between Apu Qolqepunku and El Señor de Quyllurit’i. They are also protectors against the condenados as seen in the drama that is played out during The Procession of 24 Hours. But, again, this “play” is quite real with serious consequences. When Allen asked one ukuku if he played a character from a popular story that involves the twin sons of a bear father and a human mother, the ukuku responded, “You don’t understand! We are bears, not that bear!” (2016: 431). And Allen proceeds to reflect, “Indeed, I had to learn that representation was not the operative relationship. While performing ukuku, the dancer participates in the bear’s nature, but does not represent any particular bear” (2016: 431). However, while it may be the case that the ukuku “participates in the bear’s nature” during the pilgrimage, that superhuman power of a bear is lost when the festival is over, the masks come off, and an unconscious young man is rushed to the hospital. In keeping with a characteristic of sacrifice that I have been tracing throughout this thesis, the boundaries that are transgressed during the pilgrimage are ultimately reinstated once again in an ongoing series of repetitions with slight differences along the way as ideological paradigms slowly shift over time (and space).
e. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated a number of ways in which the animu or “life-force” of others is drawn in and incorporated into the self through mimetic performances, and I have argued for a form of mimesis that involves both the logics of representation and participation. Within the settings of particular ritual contexts, a priest is Christ just as an ukuku is a bear, an apacheta is Ausangate, La Virgen Dolorosa is Pachamama, and so forth. In the ritual practice of mimesis, difference and sameness, identification and differentiation, simultaneously co-exist. Furthermore, the work of incorporating difference through mimetic performance is never-ending. The fractal system that I have been describing throughout this thesis is not a total system with hermetically sealed borders but an ongoing and dynamic one that continues to branch out in new directions at the tinku sites where selves and others converge. In this open system, what is analogous to what and who is in a position of power in relation to whom are contingent products of history and ongoing sets of power relations between the different agents involved.
Conclusion: A Frozen Water Tap

There is one last miniature version of Ausangate that I would like to discuss. It was such an ordinary part of everyday life in Pacchanta that I came to take it for granted, and I have neglected to consider its significance until now. On Lucio and Sebastiana’s farm, there is one tap for water, and it is located just outside of the house where we would cook and eat. I do not have the best cooking skills, so in addition to simple tasks such as peeling potatoes and cutting carrots, I would try to help out sometimes by washing the dishes after meals. The job was not particularly enjoyable and even less so because the water that came from the tap was freezing! Lucio told me that the water comes directly from Ausangate, so in order to represent (and instantiate) this, he built a “replica” of the mountain around the tap. On very cold mornings, I would go to it and sometimes find that the water dripping from the tap had crystalized into ice, so I would have to delay washing until later in the day after the sun got a chance to thaw it out.
I share this final photograph because I think that it encapsulates the main ideas of this thesis in many ways, and I would like to use it to reflect on the major points and arguments that have been advanced. I have argued that mountains are powerful persons who condense, crystalize, and control the flow of a life-giving and death-dealing force called *animu* that is unequally distributed throughout the region. As a “floating signifier” (Lévi-Strauss 1987 [1950]), the term *animu* can be used to refer to a bewildering variety of things; however, instead of dismissing it for this reason, I suggested that it is ethnographically important to attend to the ways in which “life-force” terms like this are used in different contexts for different strategic ends. In the case of this photograph, *animu* is water in the form of ice, and Ausangate is its source. When the ice melts, *animu* as water is one of the many things that enables the potatoes to grow, the alpacas to flourish, and humans to cook, eat, and wash the dishes.

Throughout the thesis, I have shown how some “things” hierarchically encompass and contain more *animu* than others and that a central preoccupation of everyday life is concerned with the transfer of *animu* from things that have more of it to things that have less. Glacier-covered mountains such as Ausangate contain the greatest concentrations of *animu* because they are composed of a multiplicity of bodies, so *Runakuna* like Lucio attempt to enter into reciprocal yet asymmetric exchange relations with them in order to channel in and appropriate some of their power. However, these exchanges follow a logic of sacrifice which can end up reinforcing the unequal structure that is being contested if no return from the more powerful mountain is made. Without a return to the initial sacrificial gift, the mountain only grows more powerful through the consumption of the sacrifice. In other words, in reference to the photograph, instead of flowing out as water, *animu* sometimes freezes up as ice, and the fractal body of the mountain expands.

In Chapter One, I began by considering whether or not the cosmology that I am describing may be considered to be an animist one. I discussed problematic aspects associated with this category rooted in European colonialism and Social Darwinism, and I situated this thesis within more recent debates that take animism more seriously and do not dismiss it as “false science.” I then proposed that a hierarchical form of animism characterised by encompassment is a helpful way of thinking about animism in the Andes. However, I would like to reiterate that I do not simply think that Lucio, for example, *is* an animist, or, even a hierarchical animist at that. This is not an essentialised and static category. As Lucio’s water tap in the shape of Ausangate illustrates, he is just as much of a “naturalist” as I am. Lucio did not simply make a “replica” of Ausangate over the water tap in the hope that *animu* in the form of water would “magically” appear. He knows, of course, how to work with the forces of
gravity and how to help build and decongest irrigation canals to bring the water to his home. Animism and naturalism, as well as other ontological frameworks such as totemism and analogism, co-exist side by side. They are not bounded categories but fluid ones with permeable borders, and we operate out of them at different moments in different contexts for a variety of strategic results.

In the second chapter, I continued to explore Ausangate as a “metaperson” (Sahlins 2017) by describing how his body is an unbounded one that is scattered out across space and time. In keeping with the significance of sight and the intersection of gazes that has been running throughout this thesis, I would like to suggest that Lucio’s water tap is another “eye” of Ausangate—it is a portal or gateway that allows access to the Apu’s animu. In Chapter Three, I discussed how these threshold places tend to get congested, blocked up, or in this case of the water tap, frozen shut, and I described various practices that are needed to get them opened up and the animu flowing again. In the context of the mass at Juvenal’s house, for example, we used holy water to open up these sites, and at the pilgrimage shrine, we used crosses and demandas (“icons”) that were transported to the boulder and the glacier. However, I would like to emphasise that these sacrificial practices do not only take place within the context of religious rituals; rather, they also a part of everyday life such as blowing on coca leaves and washing dishes in a freezing cold sink.

In Chapter Four, I described the conflict between the ukukus at the edge of the glacier above the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine. When the group of ukukus with whom I was travelling arrived at the glacier to plant the cross into the ice, another group of ukukus was already there, and they pleaded with us not to trespass onto the ice. They said that the glacier is melting and that they are there to protect it. I proposed that the conflict stemmed from different ontological assumptions about what the glacier is, and I suggested that the protection narrative was being performed by “indigenous mestizos” (de la Cadena 2000) from urban centres that conforms to stereotypical representations of indigenous people as protectors of the environment. I then proceeded to situate contemporary anxieties about anthropogenic climate change within a longer history of debates from the Enlightenment that concerned the relationship between humans and the environment. Strikingly, the icicle coming down from the water tap in the sink looks just like a glacier advancing down a mountain, or perhaps it’s receding? But, the icicle in the sink does not simply “look like” or “resemble” a glacier; it participates in the same fractal form of a glacier. Human-built environments like sinks and water taps and the “natural” environment participate in the same structure. Despite ideas inherited from the Enlightenment
that stress human separation from nature, anxieties about anthropogenic climate change suggest that we are not as separate as we may have thought.

In the upper left-side of that same photograph there is a box with Vilma’s faded name painted on it. To recall, Vilma is the youngest of the Mandura-Pfacsí family, and she is also my ahijada (“goddaughter”) through baptism. The box is for her toothbrush and toothpaste. The other members of the family each have their own boxes in succeeding order by age to the left. Lucio’s decision to build the toothbrush boxes was encouraged by a local NGO. In Chapter Five, I recalled an episode in which Vilma was looking at a photograph of a Quechua-speaking farmer, and she said in Spanish, “O pobre campesino,” and her father, Lucio, laughed and said, “Tú eres un pobre campesino” (“You are a poor peasant farmer!”). She then looked up from the photograph and nervously giggled. In that chapter, I discussed a variety of ways in which people, animals, and things (as well as different kinds of them) are put into boxes and categories of identification. The chapter is a reflection on the work of classification. In the first part of the chapter, I discussed the human categories of “Runa,” “campesino,” “indigenous,” and “mestizo,” and in the second half, the nonhuman categories of paqochakuna (“alpacas”) and tirakuna (“earth-beings”). I showed how being and belonging to these categories is not fixed and closed but rather open and ongoing. Movement in and out of them is not a static essence but a product that is based on particular practices and sets of relations with others. I also reflected on the work of the trickster-like ukuku who disrupts certain categories only to re-instate them as well as the role of the rondas in policing other kinds of boundaries within and between ayllus. Given my short stay in Pacchanta of only a year, unfortunately, there was no box for my toothbrush. However, if I had stayed there longer, I would like to think that we could have constructed another box for me.

In Chapter Six, I returned one more time to the Quyllurit’i pilgrimage shrine, and I discussed a number of ways in which the animu of alterity is incorporated into the self through mimetic performances. I began with a reflection on my own mimetic and self-reflexive performance as a priest In Persona Christi (“In the Person of Christ”), and I then moved to a description of a number of mimetic “games” taking place outside the church. In the second half of the chapter, I proceeded to reflect on this same topic of mimesis through the movement of a number of statuettes in the region around the shrine. Throughout the chapter, I argued for an understanding of mimesis that involves both representation and participation. In this last photograph, for example, the miniature version of Ausangate over the water tap is both a representation of Ausangate and an instantiation of Ausangate. It is a mimetic work of art that
represents the mountain in order to appropriate and channel in some of the *animu* of the mountain—in this case, *animu* in the form of water.

If I could return to the Andes and spend some more time with the Mandura-Pfacsi family, among others, I would probably spend less time trying to understand mountains and more time trying to understand water—particularly rivers and the glacial lakes that feed them as well as the dams that contain them. Before, during, and after fieldwork, I have been a bit obsessed with mountains and thinking about them as concentrations and containers of *animu*. At the end of this thesis, I have come to realise that perhaps I got it a bit wrong. Mountains might be the most powerful persons around but that’s not the most important point—the most important point is how to tap into that power and redistribute it along more egalitarian lines—that is, how to make a vertical and hierarchical cosmos into a more horizontal one and how not to get consumed in the process. I think that a better understanding of how water flows through the Andes would be helpful here. Instead of focusing on how power is concentrated into singularities like mountains, it might be better to focus on how power is dispersed and distributed into pluralities through water—that is, not how to move from the many to the one in a homogenous way but how to move from the one to the many in heterogenous ways (Scott 2000). That last photograph of the sink is perhaps a step in thinking through the cosmos as a giant plumbing system that is in constant need of maintenance—a cosmos that needs humans to break up the ice and unclog the drains. Or perhaps, we are the clogs, and the cosmos needs to unclog us?

As glaciers melt in the Andes, there is plenty of water flowing right now. But, what is going to happen when the glaciers run dry? Any practical interventions and “solutions” to the problem of climate change in the Andes (and beyond) need to include critical reflexive thinking about the ontological assumptions out of which different actors are operating. If not, as illustrated in countless failed development projects, collaboration is impossible, solutions are not achieved, and problems are often made worse. I hope that this thesis has made a contribution toward understanding an “Andean cosmos” that is continually in flux and that it can be helpful in the formation of more symmetrical alliances across differences within a shared world.
References


Burnet, T. 1684. A Sacred Theory of the Earth: containing an account of the original of the earth and of all the general changes which it hath already undergone or is to undergo, till the consummation of all things. London.


Leach, E. 1976. *Culture and Communication: the logic by which symbols are connected.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


